COSIVE How men

How men really cope with being dumped

(and there's not a tub of Ben & Jerry's in sight)

FIFTY SHADES

The books, the film... so what's it done to your sex life?

When is the right time to have a baby?

Inside Emmas marriage

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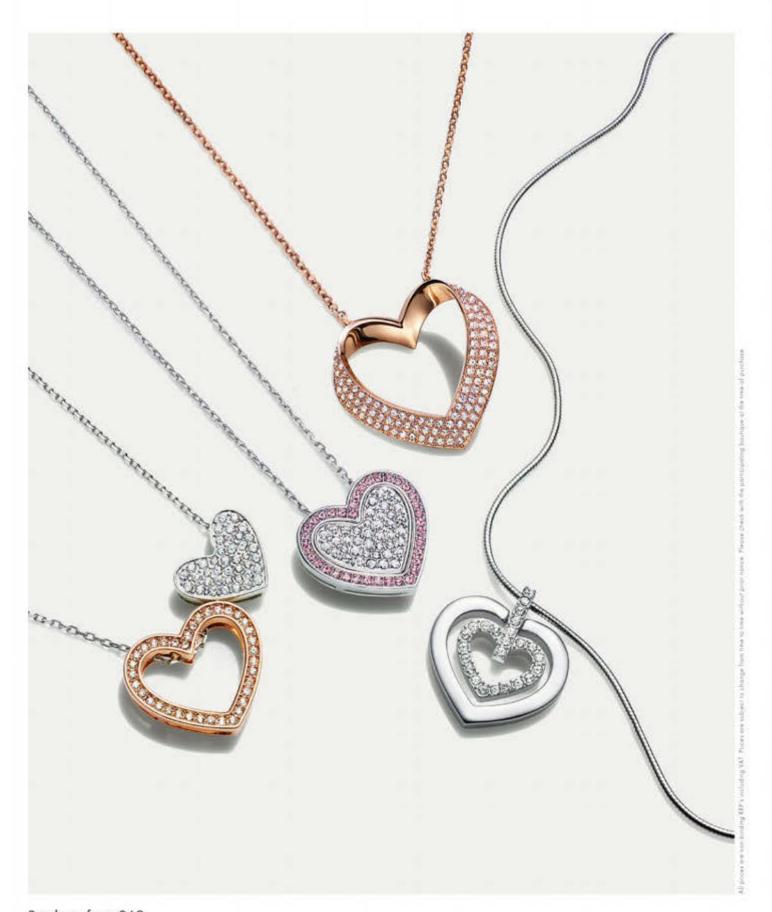
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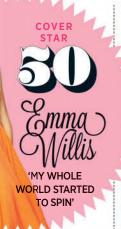


MAX FACTOR X



MARCH 2015

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From pub opening hours, career opportunities, having enough money to go out and paying VAT on tampons, to ensuring you have access to regular smear tests and the possibility you might one day be able to afford your own home... every aspect of your life is affected by politics and politicians. It's easy to yawn and declare that you have no interest in the P-word but, like it or not, those politicians are making policies that affect you and me right now.

And, like it or not, politicians write policies for people who vote. That might explain why a lot of the problems you're facing right now (crazy house prices, zero-hours contracts, street harassment,

anvone?) don't seem to be top of the agenda for the main

parties. But there is a lot of talk of pensions, because older people are much more likely to put their 'X' in the voting box.

Currently only about half of all young people are registered to vote, compared with 96% of those over 65, - but this month we're determined to change those figures, swing that balance and make this coming election all about YOU.

We've partnered with Bite The Ballot, a fantastic movement that's determined to make sure that, come polling day, as many of you as possible have the power to exercise your right to vote. 5 February is National Voter Registration Day: a bit of a mouthful, but in reality it's easy. Just go to Cosmopolitan.co.uk/vote and click the button. Then tell your friends, flatmates, colleagues and, yes, even that awkward guy you met on Tinder.



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Louise Court

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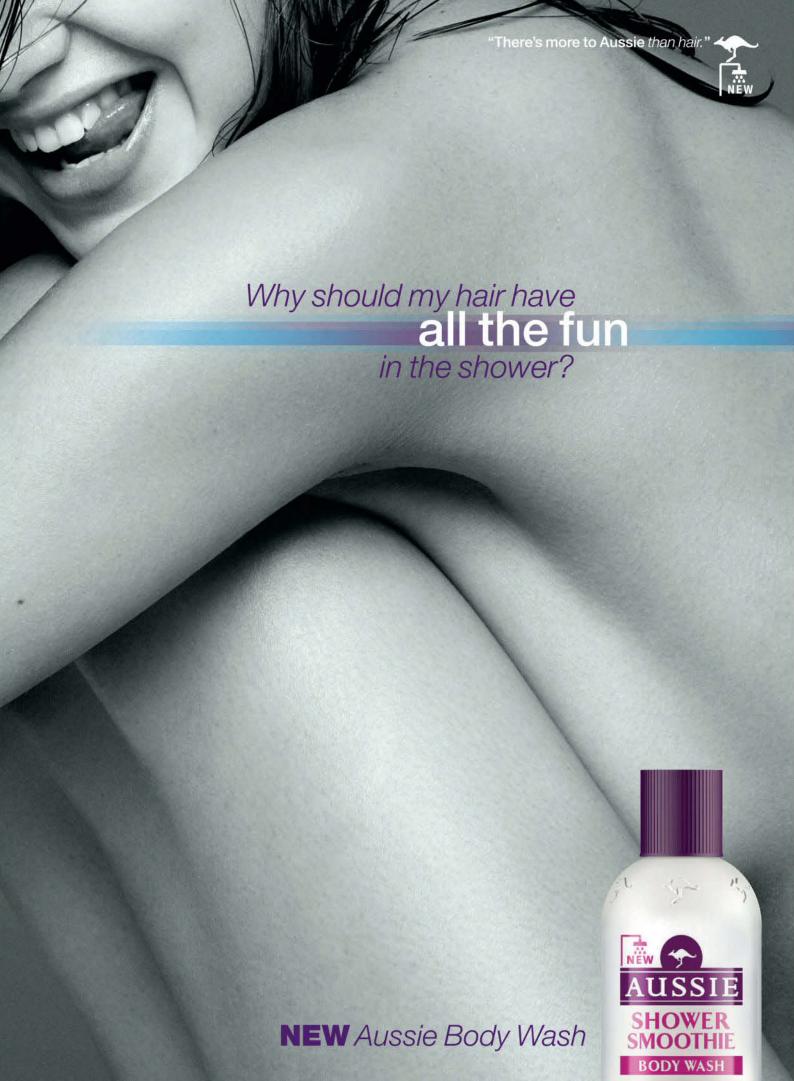
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Cosmo's **Millennial Manifesto**

I absolutely loved What You Really Want From This Year's Election (February). It's so refreshing to see things that women care about, such as workplace rights and updated sex education, discussed. With the male-to-female ratio of MPs at around 7:2, it's still harder for us to get our point across. I hope readers shout the

message from the rooftops so we Victoria, Yorkshire

@HollieDuffy9

Showing women that normal bodies are beautiful - well done Cosmo and Khloé Kardashian!

Amanda, Lancashire

When The Other Woman Is His Mum (February) reminded me of my last date, and I ended it when we went out

get what we want in the election.

relationship. She tagged along on every to discuss the issue - and she came too!

Cosmopolitan.co.uk this month

Redheads are even more amazing than we realised

Know an awesome redhead? Here are 13 brilliant facts about them everyone should know: Cosmopolitan.co.uk/redheads

20 signs you're with your forever person

Find out if you've got a keeper: Cosmopolitan.co.uk/foreverperson

How to pull an all-nighter (of work)

> Students: it turns out it's not all down to Red Bull...Cosmopolitan.co.uk/allnighter

Important pictures of men with and without beards

Is facial fuzz here to stay? Look at these and decide: Cosmopolitan.co.uk/beards

Spelling fails that make you seethe

'Shoplifters will be prostituted' - really? Cosmopolitan.co.uk/spelling

10 mixers that'll make alcoholic drinks healthier

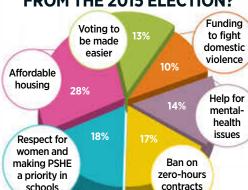
➤ Pub, anyone? Cosmopolitan.co.uk/mixers

on CosmopolitanUK's Instagram



Look around you. So reassuringly true.

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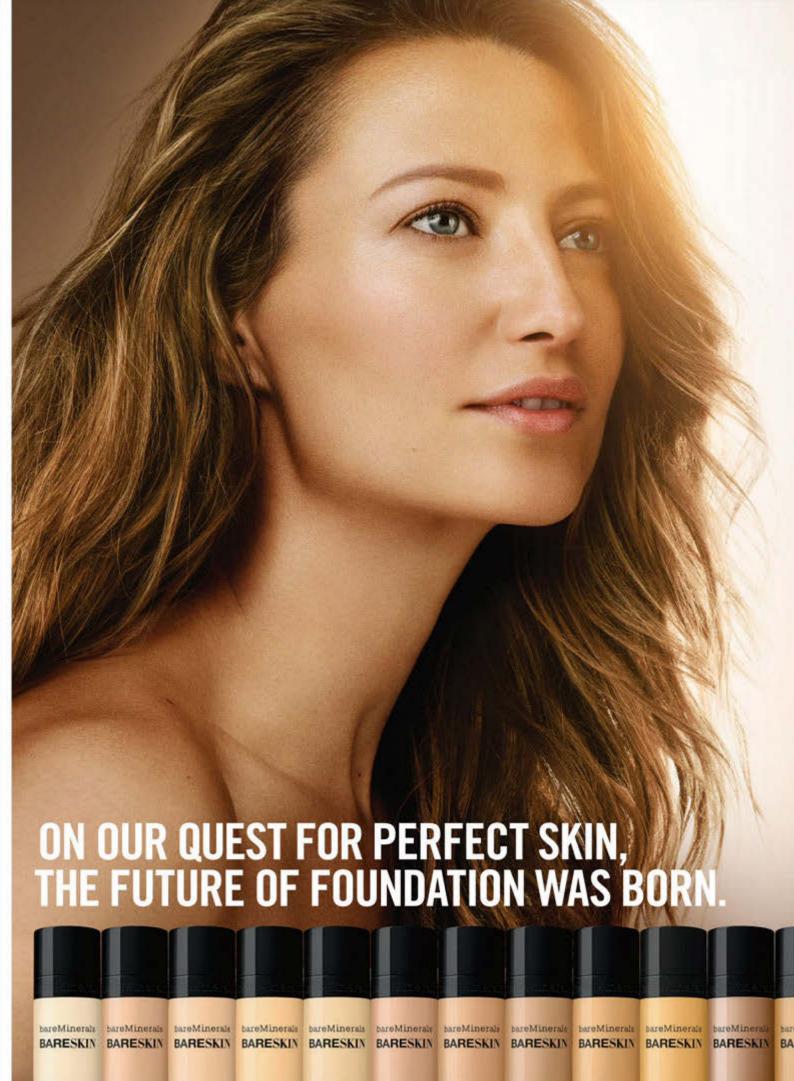
all these years. After all, who wants skin that's,

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Clashing prints

Prevent pattern overload and avoid looking like your gran's sofa



Office chic

Geometric prints are huge this season – but avoid going OTT for work. Stick to a simple colour palette and fine prints.

Junior Designer Jessica Lockett wears: Jacket, £140, Taifun. Top, £38; skirt, £38, both Asos Africa. Shoes, £45, Oasis. Necklace, £29, Accessorize



Follow Jessica @JessicaLockett



Subtle take

If you're not up for going print mad, try just a jacket and accessories. Pops of animal print and florals work wonders with wardrobe staples.

Online Beauty Editor Bridget March wears: Jacket, £199, Karen Millen. Top, £25, River Island. Jeans, £99, Gerry Weber. Shoes, £68, Office. Clutch, £50, Maison Scotch at Scotch & Soda

💎 Follow Bridget @bridgetmarch



Try stripes

Scared of too many patterns? Try stripes, but mix it up. A horizontal line will give you curves, while vertical stripes create the illusion of height.

Fashion Coordinator Holly Coopey wears: Top, £28, Next. Trousers, £42, Topshop. Trainers, £54.99, Superga at Office



Follow Holly @HollyCooop





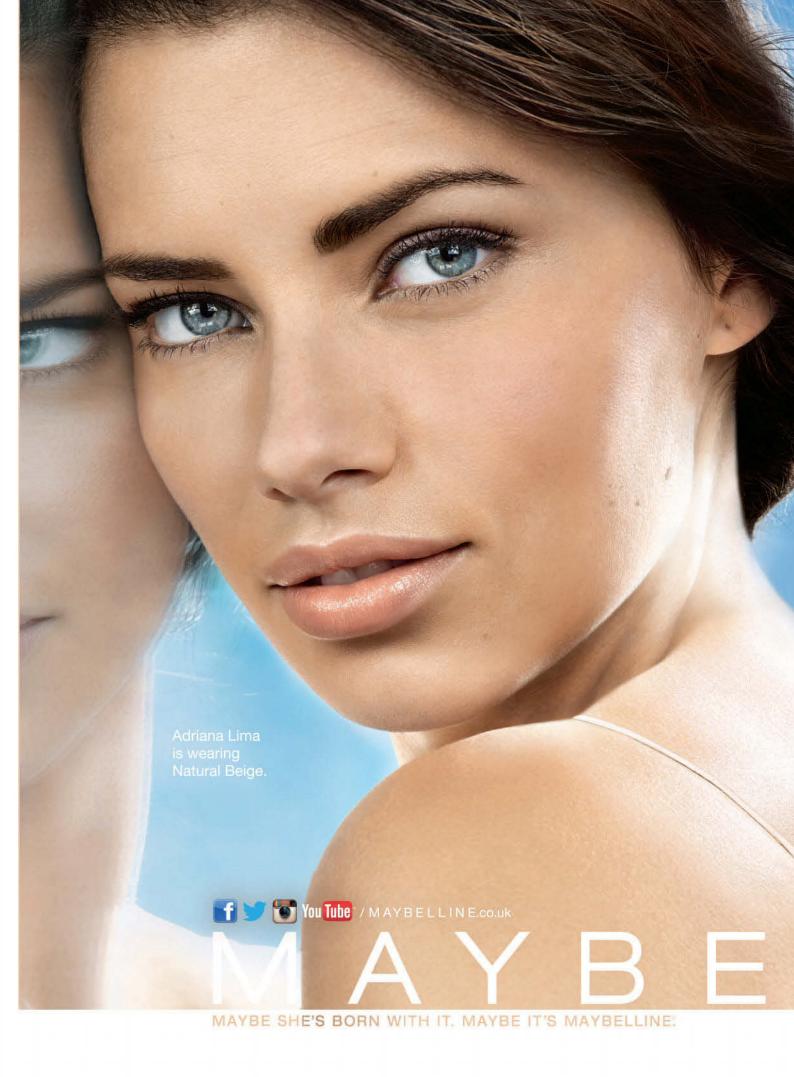




Geometrics, circles <mark>੪ stripes</mark>



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My mantra

GOOD THINGS

COME TO

THOSE WHO

WORK THEIR

BUTTS OFF

AND NEVER

GIVE UP.

designer from London

When I started my label, I didn't have a full understanding of how much hard work it would

take. It was naivety rather than bravery! When I left school aged 18, I joined the buying team at Whistles. I learned on the job and did evening classes in shoe design at London College Of Fashion. Then, aged 25, I launched my label, which is now sold in Harvey Nichols, Selfridges, and more than 20 countries.

I've always been a big accessories fan. The first heels I bought were a chunky black

suede Ravel pair that I wore everywhere when I was 12. Now I only wear my own designs.

My team, based in a studio near London Bridge, is made up of two designers, a product developer and me. Our starting point could be anything - maybe something I've seen at a flea market or in a vintage store. We pick themes and colour palettes, and the collection gradually comes together.

My signature is gold hardware - buckles and

exposed zips. It's a strong look for confident women. Each range has about 300 different styles - that's after we've whittled them down! We have to think about all our customers' needs - cool and casual for the US and UK, open toes in the Middle East and strong, edgy designs for China and Italy. Best bit: Turning my ideas into real, wearable shoes.

I love seeing

the finished product. Worst bit: I travel a lot, and last year I took 20 long-haul flights. It's exciting, but it nearly killed me!



MILLENNIAL masterclass

Be confident but learn to take advice'



Becky Tong, 22, grew up in a house filled with music but she

never intended to make it her career

Despite my dad Pete's job as a Radio 1 DJ, I didn't set out to have a career in music. I initially studied art at university, but found it a bit boring. During my degree, I got an internship at an artist-management company, and although I started out making tea (which everyone does), it was something I felt I understood and was passionate about.

So when they offered me a job, I quit my degree. Some people don't get why, but I knew uni couldn't teach me as much about the industry as I learnt first-hand on the job.

I now have my own business, Juicebox, which supports up-and-coming musicians, and I also have a club night showcasing emerging acts. I get to travel the world, and once DJed at a party in a chalet in Gstaad, which was amazing - Madonna was on the dance floor! Although things have improved, and Dad taught me a lot about the industry, I've found it hard to be surrounded by older powerful men who'd assume I was more junior than I was. But I knew I could prove myself - I have a good ear for music, and if you can show you're better than the boys, employers won't ignore that.

The most important thing I've learnt is to accept that vou don't know it all. Listen to people, take on their experience and make it work for you. Be confident in your opinion - but learn how to take advice.

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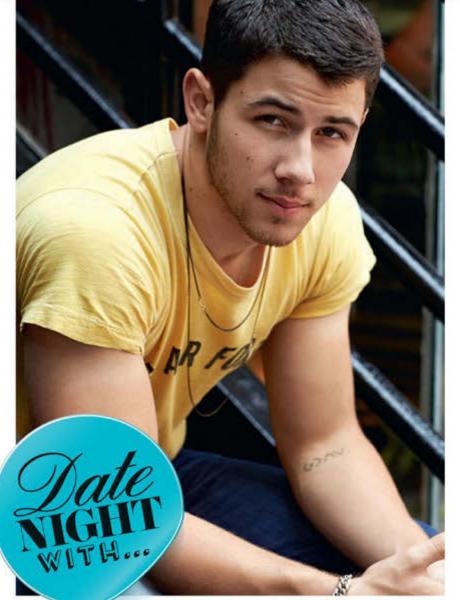
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Nick Jonas

So how does this singer-turned-sex god turn on the romance?

A date with a Jonas brother! Are you taking us to Disneyland?

"Good one. No, we're going for tapas, then bowling. It's our first date so I want to keep it quite casual. An activity is good, so if conversation dries up we have something to keep us occupied."

Charming! Where did you take Olivia [Culpo, Nick's

Charming! Where did you take Olivia [Culpo, Nick's girlfriend of two years] for your first date?

"I had a chef make a delicious salmon dinner and we ate it on the rooftop of my apartment in New York. It was really special. And lucky, because the only thing I can make is a bowl of cereal. Olivia is a great cook, though, so it's worked out."

How long after a date before you text?

"Here's my tactic: at the end of the date I say, 'Send me a text so I know you got home safely.' I'll reply but keep it short, then wait a day to start a proper conversation. It's all about timing."

Ah, so guys do this too as a playing-it-cool way to keep our attention?

"Exactly. But I have a responsibility to all mankind to not give away our secrets. I've said too much already!"

What are your best and worst traits?

"I've been told I snore pretty loudly. But the good news is I'll never lie."

Even if she asks your opinion on an outfit and you hate it?

"Yep. I'd be sensitive, though and say, 'It's not my favourite.' I'm romantic too: our first Christmas together I bought Olivia 12 gifts that all held some significance to the year we'd had. She loved it."

Aw! What'll you do for Valentine's Day?

"I don't know. Until last year I'd never celebrated it. People put a lot of emphasis on the day, which can be problematic, but last year Olivia and I and two of our friends went on holiday to the Dominican Republic, which happened to fall over Valentine's Day. That was awesome."

Do you ask your brothers Joe and Kevin for dating advice?

"Yeah, I talk to them a lot. The best advice they gave me was just to keep it simple; don't overthink it. It lowers the pressure."

What's the best way to ask you out?

"Don't make a big deal out of it. Think of a fun date – I'm going to say bowling again – and just say, 'Hey, fancy a game sometime?' I like confident women. Don't be afraid of

rejection, because it really isn't that bad."

Wise words for a 22-year-old. Did being a famous teen make you grow up faster?

"Leaving the band was the defining transition from boy to man. I went solo, and filmed the TV show *Kingdom*, where I got naked and did sex scenes. It was pretty intense! But it was very freeing for me."

You wrote a song called Jealousy. Are you the jealous type?

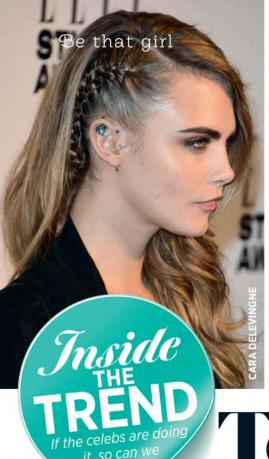
"A fair amount of jealousy is good. If there's none, that's a little strange. But if it crosses the line and gets uncomfortable, that's not so good. I wrote the song after a date with Olivia when a guy stared at her for an uncomfortably long time. Not cool. I was pretty chilled at the time, but let my anger out through writing the song later."

• Nick's single Chains is out now; his self-titled album is out 13 April

Google stalk!

The obligatory pre-date check-up threw up the following...

- He almost broke the internet when a steamy sex scene with him in Kingdom went viral. He gained 15lbs of pure muscle for the role.
- He dated Miley Cyrus when the pair were 13 before moving on to Selena Gomez, Player.
- The famous purity rings worn by the Jonas Brothers have been set aside, as Nick admitted this year he was, "An adult in all ways." We get it.
 He's a master of the
- He's a master of the one-handed cartwheel. We bet that comes in handy, er, never.







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5 things you didn't know about *Fifty Shades*

Rumour has it Ryan Gosling turned down the role of Christian Grey in *Fifty Shades Of Grey*, then – after Charlie Hunnam from *Sons Of Anarchy* dropped out – Jamie Dornan, the model-turned-actor who played cold-eyed killer

Paul in BBC's *The Fall*, was finally cast.

Author EL James had never been to Seattle (where the book is set), so she used Google Street View to visualise the locations. The film was shot in Vancouver. According to one poll, 44% of women prefer reading *Fifty Shades Of Grey* to actually having sex.

Dakota Johnson – who plays Mr Grey's submissive lover Anastasia – auditioned for *Girls*, but wasn't cast. She also played Napster co-founder Sean Parker's (Justin Timberlake) one-night stand in *The Social Network*.

Everyone from Oprah to Harry Styles is a fan of the books it seems. Harry joked, "A female friend forced me to read it out to her... I was like, 'Hmmm'. It seems interesting. I could probably learn from it. I feel like it's an educational and interesting read."

Fifty Shades is out 13 February

BAROMETER

All over it

ANNA KENDRICK

Stylish, funny and starring in film of the month, Cake, with Jennifer Aniston (see right). We can't wait to see her in the sequel to cult hit Pitch Perfect in April.



GALENTINE'S

That's swapping cards, presents and general fun with your girl friends instead of a guy this Valentine's Day. True love, guaranteed.



PHOEBE'S COMEBACK!

Ten years after the first series, Lisa Kudrow returns in The Comeback – a dark comedy by SATC genius Michael Patrick King – on Sky Atlantic this month.



So over it

COMEBACK REGRET

Avoid thinking, 'I wish I'd said xxx' ever again, by arming yourself with Daisy de Villeneuve's bible of witty comebacks for every situ, I Should Have Said (£7.99, Hardie Grant).





CAKE

Get ready for Jennifer Aniston to say goodbye to Rachel for ever. She plays Claire, a woman suffering from chronic and debilitating pain. It's hard and heavy, and her physical transformation is equally dramatic, with her scrubbed-bare face covered in scars. At her career best, Jen has us gripped as we wonder what happened in Claire's tragic past. When she strikes up a friendship with widower Roy (Sam Worthington), whose wife (Anna Kendrick) took her own life, things get even more tense. It's little wonder that those in the Hollywood know are hinting Jen should clear her mantelpiece pre-Oscars. Totally unmissable.

Out 20 February











The Show

LOOKING

If you like your American dramas messy, real and sexy, then look no further than Looking. Back for its second series, it follows three gay men living in San Francisco. There are love triangles and tribulations as they party, couple up and fall in love. Paddy is our star, and this series picks up with him getting into a classic Carrie Bradshaw-style pickle with his boss Kevin (played by Brit Russell Tovey). Think: Sex And The City or Girls with gay men. It's funny and the bedroom scenes are pretty strong stuff, but what we like best is that it's not trying hard to be controversial, it's just a great show about sex and relationships where the main characters happen to be men who like men. Airs 12 February, Sky Atlantic



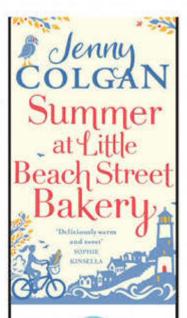


IF I FALL, IF I DIE BY MICHAEL CHRISTIE

Aged 11, Will has never been outside. Trapped at home with his panicstricken, agoraphobic mother, he wears a helmet to reassure her he's OK. He spends his days painting pictures that his mum assures him are works of genius, until one morning a loud bang draws him outside. What follows is gripping. If you liked Emma Donoghue's Room, you'll love seeing the world and his mother's tragic story through Will's eyes. There's adventure too - when a local boy vanishes, Will transforms from terrified to fearless, rebelling against his mother, hunting the truth and getting addicted to the danger he avoided for so long. A book you'll want to keep, but won't be able to resist sharing with friends. Out now (£12.99, William Heinemann)









SUMMER AT LITTLE BEACH STREET BAKERY BY JENNY COLGAN

This sunny read will make you feel drenched in vitamin D until the real thing comes along. It's been two years since Polly moved to the Cornish town of Mount Polbearne and started Little Beach Street Bakery (if you've missed book one, there's a catch-up chapter). She's living in a converted lighthouse with gorgeous beekeeper Huckle, making friends with the villagers and trying to house-train her pet puffin Neil. But when a local woman dies, everything Polly has worked for is suddenly under threat. There are lots of books about women moving to the country and starting again, but Colgan's fishing village feels real, the characters are funny and the dilemmas genuine. Out 26 February (£7.99, Sphere)

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Confessions Because it's good to share... right?

CLAIV TO

When a run-in with a celebrity turns into a full-on car crash...

Firth fail

I was so excited when I won tickets to a celeb-packed awards ceremony – my friend and I spent ages getting dressed up. Almost as soon as we arrived, sipping our first glass of free champagne and feeling swish, I tripped over and ended up sprawled on the floor, dress covered in the bubbly I'd spilt. I thought things couldn't get any worse – until Colin Firth opened a nearby door and found me in a heap at his feet! He peered down at me looking startled as I leapt up and legged it. The *shame*! **Katie, 29**, *journalist, London*

15 minutes of shame

I was enjoying the sun in the park when a local TV weather crew arrived to ask people whether they wore sunscreen. I said, "Not often in England." They asked whether I did on holiday and I replied, "Yes, but it's a different sun, isn't it?" I'd meant it's hotter and burns you more easily, but I didn't realise how stupid it sounded until the show aired. Cue a call from my mum saying I'd looked a total idiot on TV. And from my colleagues. And



my friends. That's what 15 minutes of fame gets you.

Gemma, 30, photographer, Yorkshire

Drink pink

When I was working for a magazine, I interviewed a top male Olympic gymnast about his diet. One of my

questions was, "What do you drink on a night out?" He answered, "Pink fizzy wine," and it seemed so silly I burst out laughing. He looked appalled and said, "I wasn't joking." I stuttered to a stop and muttered, "Yeah, it's just funny because that's my favourite too." I went bright red, and when I listened back to the recording it was >

"I really loved you in... er..."

painfully obvious that I was lying. But pink fizzy wine? Seriously? Louise*, 30, journalist, London

Confessions

The Horne identity

At a gig, I noticed someone I recognised standing beside me, but I couldn't place him at all. Not wanting to be rude, I started chatting with him. Still unable to figure out how I knew him, I decided to be straight with him and ask. "We've never met before," he said. Then the penny dropped – it was Mathew Horne! I tried to laugh it off but I was so embarrassed. We kept making accidental eye contact all night - so awkward. Erin, 27, student, Edinburgh

To protect and

I volunteered at an Aids conference a few years back because I wanted to see Bill Clinton speak. I was due to clock off before he was supposed to start, so I swapped shifts with a friend. But when I arrived, everyone looked shocked to see me - it turned out my 6ft 3ins male friend had been allocated as an extra security guard for Chelsea Clinton! I'm 5ft 2ins and it was really obvious I was gatecrashing. I spent the whole time jumping at the slightest sound, panicking that I'd have to dramatically save Chelsea. Luckily nothing scary happened, but I still consider it a brush with death. Hannah*, 27, scientist, Cambridgeshire

No plane, no gain

I was travelling to LA for work and my company paid for me to fly first class. A group of guys with lots of luggage and equipment were boarding too - it turned out to be Snow Patrol. During the flight, one of the band members kept topping up everyone's glasses with champagne and larking about, making us laugh. By the end of the flight, he was dressed in a spare stewardess outfit standing by the door waving everyone off! Ah, the wonders of fancy flying... **Mel, 35,** software engineer, Yorkshire

MEN CONFESS



VHILE YOU SLEEPING

When sweet dreams turn into your worst nightmare

I HAVE A SCREAM

After a party, a group of us stayed over in a mate's lounge. I woke up suddenly in the middle of the night, standing in the corner and screaming at the top of my voice - I must've been having a nightmare! Everyone was blundering around, panicking - one guy even picked up a vase as a weapon. I was so embarrassed. Zero man points...

Jack, 27, teacher, London

THE NAKED TRUTH

Travelling for business, my company had put me up in a swanky hotel. I had a lovely sleep, but when

I went down for breakfast the next morning, the staff started laughing when they saw me. I asked what was wrong, and they admitted I'd been sleepwalking totally naked! They'd watched me roaming around on the CCTV for half an hour before one of them came to help me. I didn't remember it at all, but they had a good laugh at least. Sandy, 28, teacher, Devon

URINE TROUBLE

I'd recently moved into a flatshare, and it was soon clear that one guy, lain*, and I didn't get on. He was sensible and quiet, and I got the feeling he thought I was

a bit of a prat. I'd been trying to build bridges and was making headway, until one morning for no reason he was more snotty with me than ever. I had no idea what I'd done - then he explained I'd walked into his room in the night and peed all over him, not even flinching when he shouted at me to stop. I knew there was no way back for our relationship after that...

Andy*, 36, driver, Cardiff

QUIET AT THE BACK

Sitting at the back of a boring lecture after a heavy night out, I dozed off. In my dream. I was sitting in the exact same spot when suddenly, the lecturer asked me a question. I hadn't heard, so I said, "Hmm?" loudly enough to wake myself up. The lecturer paused and the whole class turned to look at me. I never

went to class so hung-over again. Kieran, 24, student, London •



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LORÉAL



My final column

Sophie Goddard says goodbye to the single life

've been dreading writing this column. I don't want to do the whole wanky, 'I've got a boyfriend now, bye' thing because it's super-smug and annoying (and those people Being called who disappear as soon

as they've got a boyfriend are the worst). Plus, there's something about writing this kind of public announcement that fills me with a sense of doom (pride comes

before a fall, right?). So rather than tempt fate by bleating on about how loved-up I am, and how uh-mazing Will is (trust me, his ego doesn't need it), I'll tell you what I'd have wanted to hear, this time a year ago, when I was single, fed up and wondering whether I was ever going to meet anybody I liked. And if – by some miracle – I found them, how the hell I'd make them like me back.

I can't lie - it wasn't easy. I went on a *lot* of dates. And although it was really fun at times, those trips home on the night bus after yet another 'meh' evening could feel pretty depressing. I didn't meet anybody I clicked with; nobody gave me butterflies, or made

me laugh till I snorted (yeah, I know, I'm all sorts of sexy, right?). Until Will that is, obviously.

When we first met (through Tinder), I excitedly told my friends how much I liked him. "Oh, you're so lucky!" they cooed. But although their words were well-meant, they riled me. "I'm not, actually," I'd snap. Hadn't I brought this about myself? I'd gone on Tinder and 'put myself out there'. I mean, I swiped right! I was a hoot on our first date! I made this happen!

It's kind of like applying for a job. You've done your research, practised interview questions until you're sleep-talking company policies, and then when you do finally land the role (hooray!) somebody pipes up with, "OMG you're so lucky." Arghhh! 'No I'm not! I worked hard for this shit!' you want to shriek. Being called 'lucky' feels like an insult – as if Will just fell into my lap, and I should be grateful for him.

But when I started thinking about what I've learnt about dating, it dawned on me that maybe I don't have that much genuine wisdom to impart after all. What had I actually done differently with Will? Er, not that much, really.

> Because the truth – the big dating 'secret' that nobody ever tells you – is that

> > love is a fluke.

Although I put myself out there, really all it boiled down to was being in the right place (or on the right dating app) at the right time. That's it. Which can

happen to anybody, at any time (and trust me, ladies, it will happen). The only thing I can tell you with any authority is that when it does, you'll find yourself looking at

them and thinking, 'Ah, there you are, I've been waiting for you.' And you just can't help but feel very lucky indeed.

"lucky" feels like

an insult, as if Will

just fell into my

lap and I should

be grateful'





Next month: Meet our new Sex & The Single Girl columnist auren Franklin

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TURN YOUR BIG HAIR OBSESSION INTO FULLER, THICKER-LOOKING HAIR THE BLUE ONE



THE BLUE ONE #HAIROBSESSION

WHAT'S YOURS?
LOREAL-PARIS.CO.UK/HAIROBSESSION





Spending Valentine's Day on your own isn't all bad, says Tom Craine

y first-ever Valentine's Day card was from my mum. I knew this because there were certain tell-tale signs. Firstly, it was in her handwriting. I'd forged enough, 'Please excuse Tom from rugby, he's feeling sniffly,' notes to recognise it. The second clue was that it featured the phrase, 'To the most handsome boy in school; something she told me, on average, about twice a minute. Then finally Luckily, my (and probably most friends didn't tellingly), I saw her

hope I'd find it and assume I had a secret admirer. Yep, absolutely gutting. And proof that maybe I wasn't really the most handsome boy in year five after all.

stuffing the card into

my school bag in the

Luckily, my friends didn't know my mum was the author, so I took it into class anyway. (If Claire Evans from my year at Bathampton Primary is reading this, I claimed it was from you. Sorry).

Sadly, Valentine's Day stress doesn't wane as you age. In fact, it becomes harder to get through it without

someone special to hand you a card emblazoned with a cartoon train and the legend, 'I choo choose you!'

In the past, I've dreaded it so much I've even launched into the classic, embittered, 'It's just a money-making machine cooked up by card companies; rant (usually armed with a half-drunk bottle of wine, staring steely-eyed at myself in the bathroom mirror).

But this year, the time has come to focus on the benefits of spending Valentine's Day alone. For a start, singles don't have to organise anything, which is great, as I thoroughly resent most events in my diary when they arrive. When it comes down to it, I end up wishing I had my feet up on the sofa, watching Tom Jones pressing a big red button and name-dropping Elvis, rather than dragging myself across town to eat escargot at Chez Joules.

Even more stressful is organising the right date. Just ask my mum – last year my dad took her out for an Indian meal but, in his tight way, he tried to save money by having poppadoms at home. Without chutney. I don't know if you've ever eaten a dry poppadom, but it's a bit like chewing parchment. Not romantic.

My friend once got it wrong in the other direction, sending a huge bunch of flowers to his girlfriend's office. But instead of being thrilled, she was mortified, describing it as the most embarrassing thing she'd been through. And this from a person who once ran a marathon dressed as a Cornish pasty.

> All this has got me thinking that a) I might have a pasty for lunch, and b) the

> > increasing showiness of Valentine's Day is not something I'll miss. It seems as if the main concern is showing other people how romantic you are, rather than the one you love.

With that in mind, it's clear what I need to do this Valentine's Day: take myself to an Indian restaurant, order all the poppadoms I can eat, then return

home to privately give myself a small bunch of heartfelt flowers - labelled. 'To the most handsome boy in the flat.'

know my mum was

the author of my

first Valentine's

Day card'



PHOTOGRAPH ANTONIO PETRONZIO. GROOMING VICTORIA BARNES

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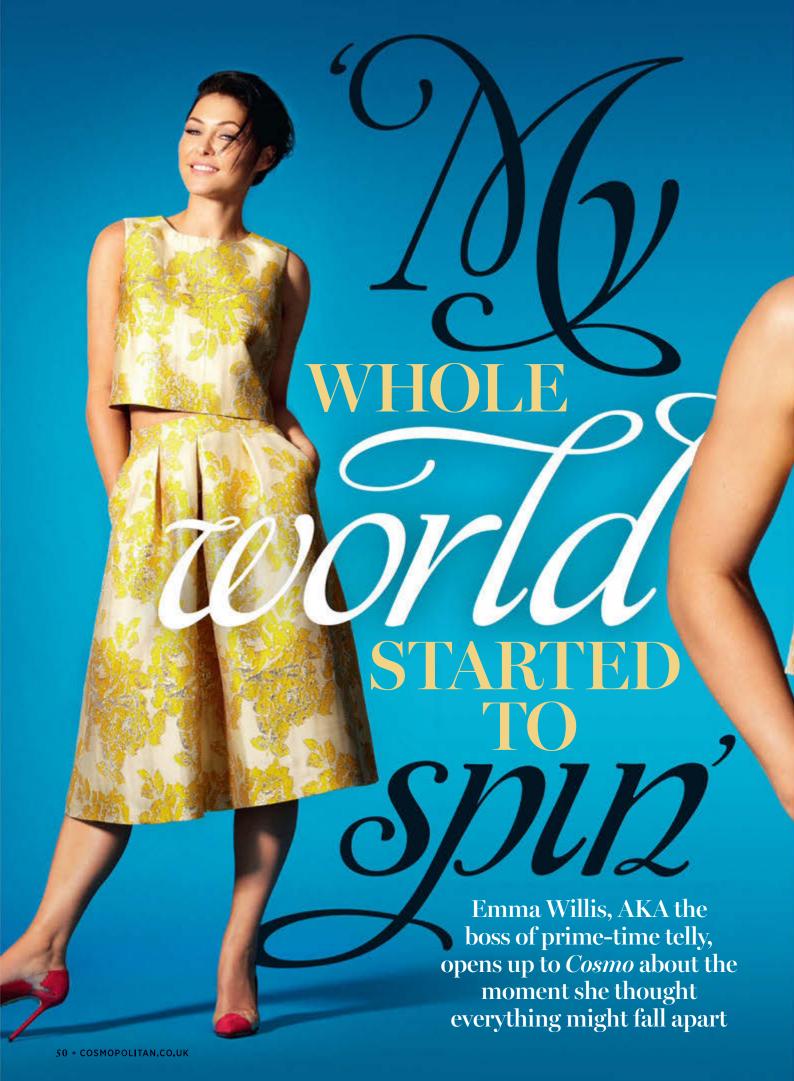
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THE **RED** ONE #HAIR**OBSESSION** WHAT'S YOURS?

WHAT'S YOURS?
LOREAL-PARIS.CO.UK/HAIROBSESSION







ou just feel like a bit of a dick," Emma Willis laughs. She's talking about how she never knows how to respond when strangers, like the electrician at her house this morning, recognise her. "He was a middle-aged man and he said to me, 'Oh, where do I know you from?" she says, doing a funny impression. It's been 12 years since she first appeared on our screens as an MTV presenter, but suddenly in the past year her career has really ramped up. Hosting major

TV gigs, from *Celebrity Big Brother* to Saturday night's *The Voice*, then back to *Big Brother*, she's become one of the most recognisable faces on TV. Factor in husband Matt from McBusted and you have a couple with serious star power.

But in the Willis household, nothing has changed. They dote on their air-guitar-playing kids, Isabelle, five and Ace, three; Emma loves *Grey's Anatomy*, Matt doesn't, and she leaves Matt lists of jobs that he inevitably doesn't get around to. "Bills, washing... he's just shit at that stuff," she says, sounding like any one of your friends. In fact, she's so unfazed by their fame, she refers to the two of them as 'freelancers'. It's the very reason she's universally loved and why she chose to meet me today in a north-London cafe – no entourage, no makeup, no fuss.

"We are quite normal with not-normal jobs," Emma says. She's ordered a white coffee and bacon with hash browns, which she laces with brown sauce. Just like she is on telly, 38-year-old Emma is cool, sweet and self-deprecating. But if anyone messes with her family, she's a lioness and you will hear her roar. Take last year, when pictures of her, Matt and the kids looking at a house with an estate agent appeared on a national news website. "We were in the middle of

WANT TO SELL OUT'

nowhere on a Saturday morning, and we never get followed – we just don't have that life," she says. So what did she do? In her own words she went "batshit crazy".

"In normal life your kids don't get photographed walking down the street. I want them to grow up like I grew up and enjoy being a kid rather than wondering, 'Why are they taking my picture?'" she explains.

Emma grew up in Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, with one elder sister and her parents Steve and Cathy, who both worked in the same hospital, as a postman and theatre assistant. When she was 17 she was signed by a modelling agent and moved to London, then New York, eventually coming back and landing a presenting job at MTV. She spent her twenties and early thirties working on smaller shows and filling in as a guest presenter on bigger ones. But even though the big jobs didn't come her way at first, you won't find any dodgy endorsements on her Google history. "It's lovely I have Big Brother and The Voice, so that's two regular jobs I love," she says. "But even before then, when I wasn't working and I couldn't find work, if something was offered to me and it didn't feel right, I wouldn't take it. And I probably should have, because I wasn't earning any money of my own - Matt was keeping me! But I just didn't want to sell out."

She wasn't alone in struggling her way to the top. In his early twenties Matt, now 31, had a well-publicised battle with drink and drugs. Now, he's well over it, he never drinks and McBusted were the break-out story of 2014, as well as our Cosmopolitan Ultimate Men Of The Year. "I'm stoked for him," she says. "I watched Busted end and his solo career not really take off the way everybody hoped, then I watched him try to figure out what he was going to do." Then, just when he'd thrown himself into acting with rave reviews in the West-End production of Wicked, a part in EastEnders, a movie and Birds Of A Feather, McBusted happened and he was back doing what he loves most: being on stage with a band.

It's obvious Emma has helped steer Matt through some pretty dark times, so I wonder how he's helped her. "I'm a worrier," she says. "I worry about everything – I worry about the kids, my family, my health, Matt's health. I always think the worst - and he keeps me calm, he's really optimistic. He's a constant support with everything. When I thought about sacking it all off, he was like, 'Don't be ridiculous, just stick with it. It's everything about him: he's an incredible person." Then, just as she begins to well up with emotion... "But he's fucking messy!" she rants, bursting out laughing. "This morning I counted seven pairs of his shoes in >





the hallway – who fucking needs that many shoes by the door?"

In fact – messiness aside – their marriage is so strong that it seems the hardest thing about being with him is when she's not with him. Especially in the past year, as he's been on the road with McBusted. There have even been tears... "Not having your family together is hard. [With him away touring] it felt relentless and I've never had to deal with that before, because I met him when Busted ended. It was such a shock

to the system, but we've always said you've got to take the opportunities while they're there and get through it."

So, smack bang in the middle of this major missing-Matt period was not the best time for Emma to be on the receiving end of a Radio 1 Breakfast Show prank. In the call

'I FELT HORRIFIC. I FELT LIKE I'D OFFENDED *everyone*

on Nick Grimshaw's show, Matt

Rocking festival cool with husband Matt Willis last year Present of the many to the many to the many to call ing Emma to check she was OK with it. Oh, and they needed an answer at once. "Suddenly my whole world."

"Suddenly my whole world started to spin," Emma recalls. "I'm quite a reactive person, so I was livid." What – on radio – sounded like a funny prank really upset Emma. It was also very well edited because her side of the conversation was definitely not suitable for morning listening: "I was saying, 'They want me to make a decision now? They can all get fucked!' I saw red – I was thinking about my family and no one else." Eventually, when she was told it was a joke, she was so shocked she hung up and cried.

"After that, I felt horrific. I felt like I'd offended everyone," she says. "What annoyed me most is that he took my one most sensitive thing [him being away] and used it as a practical joke. It took me a good week to start being OK about it. Not with him, but with myself. I felt so bad." In fact she had nothing to worry about - the other lads and wives thought she was brilliant. But Matt felt terrible too. "He walked in that night and I could see how deflated he was. He said, 'I feel like I've lost all of your trust," she says. Of course, they got over it and can even almost laugh about it now: "In hindsight it was very good and funny. It's really cruel but that's what makes it so good to listen to."

When our chat turns to fashion, Emma praises her stylist Hannah MacLeod for those trademark bright dresses and blouses she radiates in on telly. "I'm no good at doing anything other than jeans, jumper and boots, but I can't look like that on Saturday nights, so she makes me try things I usually wouldn't, and I love it," she says. As for a beauty regime, she's equally low-key. Mascara is like her 'credit card' and she won't leave the house without it - or "a bit left over from last night" as she confesses she's rocking today. "I'm lucky if I get to slap a bit of St Tropez on my face before I leave the house so I don't look like the colour of a piece of paper," she laughs in true working-mum style.

Her trademark cropped hair is staying that way too. "I tried to grow it because when I'm filming you can do more with it, but I think I suit it best shorter so I chopped it all off again – my hairdresser wasn't happy," she laughs. With that, she pulls on a parka over her grey-jumperwith-jeans-and-boots combo and we walk down the high street. No one recognises her. She gets in her car; I get on the bus. Nope, Emma Willis won't change a thing, and we don't want her to. >

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Name: EMMA WILLIS

Nickname: PICKCE

The emoji I can't text without is:



If I was a Big Brother contestant the first thing I would do is...

Get a brow on

The biggest misconception about me is:

That I have brown hair

My mum always taught me to:

Trast your

Matt has taught me to:

Secone a cleaner

Life's far too short to:

- a) Not eat chocolate
- b) Cry over men
- c) Bitch about each other
- d) Diet
- e) Other: HU OF THE ABOVE

The nicest thing I've ever read about

myself was:

H Said Mat I was the best Thing to Ever happen to him ... Until the tids came along

The most hurtful thing I've ever read

about myself was:

Nasty bucch from people I have never met who don't

You might be shocked to know I have

never:

Exten Sush

Selfies are:

- a) Embarrassing but weirdly addictive
- b) CRINGE!
- c) A way of life

I never leave the house without:

Mascara

The last book I read was:

You're the one that I want by Grovanea
The last text I received said:

Call me when you And was from:

If I was a boy for the day the first thing I'd do is:

Have a wee

I would most like to steal the following from each of The Voice coaches:

Tom Jones's CHARISMA Rita Ora's HAIR Ricky Wilson's WICE will.i.am's

Behind closed doors, Matt and I are most likely to be found:

- a) Snogging furiously
- b) Taking the mick out of each other
- c) Talking about the kids
- d) Serenading each other with McBusted lyrics

All of the about -

Draw a picture of yourself he



COSMOPOLITAN.CO.UK * 57









Dream job, travelling, owning a flat (not to mention meeting the right man)... what do you want to get ticked off before you think about becoming a mum?



The power of soft.





hen is the right time to have a baby? In my opinion, barring the obvious biological constraints, it is the question that has no answer. I know some of you are mums, while for others it's not on your radar – but whatever you choose, don't let anyone guilt trip you.

The one thing I know as the mum of two sons is that no size fits all and sometimes it's something we have no control over. I hit a crazed wall in my early thirties where my body shouted, 'I want a baby and I want it NOW!' (I'd had a rabid desire for kittens a year earlier.) It's the hardest job I have ever done – when I come into *Cosmo* at least people listen to me. Babies need unconditional love – but so do mums, mums-to-be and women who are child-free. In short.

there's no one perfect answer to the question of when to have a baby. So we asked some mums to tell us what was right for them... Louise, Cosmo's Editor-in-Chief waited. I was very naive about the fact that you have absolutely zero time to yourself when you have children, and I'm glad Paul and I got to experience time together alone and to travel first.

Children completely change the dynamic of your relationship – we were ate to have been together a long time beforehand, because lack of sleep can test your relationship to the limit!

Karen Meachen, 35, is Cosmopolitan's Head of PR, and is from Hertfordshire

'I sometimes wonder what might have been'



I fell pregnant in 2005, when my then-boyfriend and I had been together just three months. He was 21 and at uni, while I was 22 and working in

a nightclub – having a baby couldn't have been further from our minds.

Although we separated when our son was 11 months old, we've remained best

friends. I've since had my second child, a daughter born in April last year. Although it was unplanned again, it was very different – I was a decade older, and her dad Jon and I have been together for six years.

When I met my son's dad I had a trip to
Australia booked, and decided to defer it because I'd met this guy... I sometimes wonder if I'd made a different decision how my life would have turned out.

But although I have some 'what ifs', one thing's for sure: you never regret having children.

Lisa Williamson, 32, is an events manager from Edinburgh

'I'm glad I waited for the right man'



I had my son when I was 34 and my daughter in December, and occasionally wish I'd had children when I was younger. Physically,

looking after babies and toddlers is exhausting, and you have more energy – and are better able to cope with the lack of sleep – in your mid-twenties. On the other hand, on an emotional and practical level I'm happy I waited. Having children in my thirties means I've lived a little, own my own home and have more money than I would have had 10 years ago.

Most importantly, though, I'm with the right man – I only met my husband when was 30, and couldn't ask for a better father for my children.

Jenny Wood, 37, is a freelance writer from Warwickshire

'Being young parents was the making of us'



The

average age

for a woman

to have her first

child is now 28 -

three years older

I was 24, living in London with my partner Gareth and working in a pretty cool (albeit low-paid) job at the British Library when

I got pregnant. It was unplanned – although admittedly, we weren't careful with contraception. We lived in a

one-bed second-floor flat with no lift, had little money and were both young.

> I smoked a *lot*, had a terrible diet, and wasn't at all domestic.

But I was with the man I knew I wanted to have a family with one day, so it was inconceivable to me not to keep the

baby. I've never been that ambitious career-wise, but I've always known I wanted to be a mum. It seemed forces beyond my control were telling me it was the right time, so I stopped smoking, started looking after myself and committed to being PREGNANT. Now we're married with three children. On reflection, I struggled – I was the first of my friends to have a baby, so I had no one to confide in and felt very conscious about being a baby bore.

We could have gone travelling and got married before having children, but ultimately, neither of us are 'victims' – it was our choice. We have a very equal relationship, due

'I wanted to enjoy being married first'



My husband Paul and I were together for 10 years before we got married, and had always talked about having children immediately

after that. But as the wedding approached, I decided I'd prefer to enjoy our first year of married life without the stresses of getting pregnant.

We found out I was expecting the morning we boarded a plane to Florence for our first wedding anniversary – and I'm really glad we

(I think) to our wanting to prove that, despite our ages and circumstances, we could be good parents.

To be honest, I think it made us. *Julie Jordan*, 36, is a librarian from Essex

'It was time to stop putting it off'



I've been with my partner for nearly 10 years, and always said I wanted to start a family as soon as I hit my thirties. But as the

milestone approached, we kept putting it off, saying we had too much to do.

But in the end, I realised we might *never* feel ready, so I threw away my Pill. I turned 30 in September and had my little girl in December.

Running my own lingerie company has good and bad points: putting off motherhood would've given me time to concentrate on growing my business, but I do enjoy flexible hours.

I think some women put their career before starting a family, and I worry they may miss out on the chance to have a child. I made the right choice for me, but there's no right or wrong time. Whatever any woman decides, if you're lucky enough to be able to have a child it's an absolute blessing.

Alexis Smith, 30, is MD of Alexis Smith Lingerie, and is from Essex

'My son was an accident - but the timing turned out to be perfect'



I got pregnant with my son James when I was just 21. I'd been with his dad Mark for nine months, and was living with my mum and

stepdad. I was also working full-time, taking night classes and had just applied to do a nursing degree. I was on the Pill, so it was a bit of a shock. But I had a feeling everything would fall into place, and as it turns out we couldn't have asked for better timing.

Mark and I pooled our savings and bought a house, and I deferred my place at university for a year.

We decided to have another child between my second and third years of university. I became pregnant with my daughter Layla almost straight away, and finished the second year of my degree 35 weeks pregnant.

I'm currently enjoying a year off before I go back to finish my degree this September. Everything has fallen into place so perfectly. The only thing I'd change is the timing of my children's birthdays – James will turn 21 in September 2032, and Layla's 18th is two weeks later. I might start saving now...

Hayleigh Coates, 26, is a student nurse from Leeds

'I was pregnant on our honeymoon'



With our house in need of renovation, my fiancé Matt and I weren't planning on having a baby *just* yet. I was 31 and enjoying my

career, plus we wanted to have some

married fun together before starting a

family. So getting pregnant nine weeks before our wedding most definitely wasn't in the plan...

I had to stay sober on my big day, and our wine-and-steak-filled honeymoon to Argentina was actually more about my need for early nights and sudden aversion to meat. On top of that, we had to renovate our house while I was heavily pregnant.

Sam arrived three years ago, and now we've had a second child, Matilda, 18 months. I'd love to have not been pregnant for my wedding and honeymoon, but I wouldn't change anything now. Plus, if I'd had to actually plan a pregnancy, I would have been too chicken. It almost *had* to happen by accident.

Debbi Marco, 36, is a writer from London

ARE YOU PART OF GENERATION FLEX?



While doctors encourage us to have babies before fertility falls at around age 35, financial constraints are jeopardising that says Tanya de Grunwald

Women are starting to ask how they're going to have a career, start a family and make the maths add up. As founder of graduate careers-advice blog Graduate Fog, I'm struck by how many ambitious, educated young women say they're experiencing 'arrested development' - feeling too financially and professionally immature to even think about having kids of their own. And it seems many women are responding by delaying parenthood. The average age for a woman to have her first child is now 28.

"Suddenly, there's so much to weigh up," agrees Helen Tupper, founder of career-coaching courses Amazing If. "Sluggish salary growth, high rents and rocketing house prices are a killer combination. Plus, younger women say

it's taking longer than they expected to establish themselves professionally.

"Increasingly, the nagging sense they should start thinking about babies hits at exactly the moment when they feel their career is about to take off. Taking time out could mean losing the momentum."

The health of your bank balance can also be a big factor – one poll revealed that almost one in 10 25-39-year-olds have set aside having children while they gain more financial stability. And with the average student debt predicted to hit £44,000 next summer, we could see a future where parents are divided into young and old.

"Sometimes, having a baby when you're still feeling flexible about life can be advantageous," says Beth Follini, author of *Baby Or Not*. "You're not committed to a definite lifestyle, so everything is still up for grabs."

At the other end of the scale, waiting until you're older might be exhausting – but make better financial sense. "Increased income means more childcare options," says Helen. "Returning to work should be easier too. Female representation at senior levels is high on most organisations' agendas."

Those in the middle might be less keen to sacrifice a level of comfort that they've grown used to. They've achieved stability but it doesn't feel quite enough to start a family. The best advice we can give is to make the most of whichever option you choose – and live in the moment.

Tell us your story. Do you want children, do you have them or is it something you can never see in your plans? Write to cosmo.mail@hearst.co.uk.

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Our columnist Jameela Jamil talks friends with kids and explains why it's OK not to want to join their club

'm 28, and I don't think I want children for at least another 10 years. In fact, I'm not sure I want children at all. Shit. There, I've said it. Is that bad? Am I bad?

I'm racing at lightning speed towards 30, and all my female friends are getting serious about the men they date, because there's a new, husband-andbaby-daddy standard to be met.

Suddenly, they're worrying about wasting time, and saying the word

it's starting to give me the fear. Because I'm definitely not there yet. I'm nowhere *near* it. I'm about as broody as I am sporty (this coming from the girl who'll only run if she's being chased).

Before I go on, it's important for me to stress that what I'm saying comes purely from the speculation of watching other mothers. I can't speak from any experience of my own, and I really do think motherhood is a miracle that sometimes surprises people and brings out the best in them. I speak with utter candour and I speak only my opinion. I'm not judging - these are just things I wish someone had said to some of the women I know.

The thing is, motherhood is the hardest job in the world. I can only imagine what a rewarding and beautiful one it is... but the crying, the screaming, the lack of sleep, the tantrums, the questions, the fact that everything you do and say is ingested by your children in some way - there

to stay forever. And then there's the terror when they aren't home exactly when they say they will be... Oh, my god, the worry. It must devour you. It's too much pressure.

If you feel that makes me sound selfish, fair enough. I am. I want to focus on me. I have so many things that I want to do. There are many mistakes I need the freedom to make. I don't want to be tied

down - not by a man, a mortgage or a child. I can barely commit to a sandwich, never mind a baby.

I have many friends who are young mums, and they're my heroes. They're doing a bloody amazing job (and make no mistake, it is a job), but if I'm being honest, most of them are struggling. While some of the women I know genuinely wanted to have kids when they did, an awful lot went ahead with it because they thought they should. But I don't think obligation should play any part in a decision that informs your long-term happiness. For me, the right time to have a child is when it's the one thing missing in your life. When it's the only thing left you need to make you truly happy. When you crave it to the point of near madness.

Maybe that hunger for motherhood will never be something that resonates with me. All I know is this: I'm definitely not going to walk into something as huge as that without

> knowing *exactly* who I am and what I want.

If you're thinking about becoming a mother, I urge you to make sure you're doing it for you. And if, like me, you don't think it's for you, please know that's OK too. We're all here for different reasons and to live our lives our own way. Follow your heart, and try to act thoughtfully. And whatever society thinks of you after that, it can, quite frankly, bugger off.

Jameela's world I can't stop

raving about... Asos lingerie. Agent Provocateur look, without Agent Provocateur prices. **NSPA's four-step skincare** range. A detox life-saver for the face. D'Angelo's Black Messiah. The sexiest album, from the master of soul. Flegant Touch press-on nails. Great for when I have only minutes to look perfectly polished. Booja-Booja everything

- it's a dairy-free DREAM.

'ovaries' in everyday conversation, and





MISSING



MY GIRLFRIEND

If you see her on Instagram (or Facebook) please do NOT get in touch ... Although if you've got any fit single girl mates, here's my number:

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ICANORIAN IN ARRIANS

You've ended it and started moving on. But what happens to *him* once you've said goodbye? We asked three dumped men to keep diaries and share them with *Cosmo*

ccording to your basic romcom, getting your heart crushed involves eating ice cream and crying (women), or drinking beer and getting laid (men). But the truth is a lot more complicated. One report found that men in their early twenties actually take break-ups worse than women do. Another showed that when a relationship gets rocky, women want to talk about their problems, whereas men's driving force is how to get more sex.

To shed light on the subject, Cosmo asked three men who've recently gone through a break-up to keep a diary. Did they spend their time crying into their pillow – or finding a woman to share it with? Like all relationships, it seems no two break-ups are the same...



'I'M TRYING TO BE MATURE...' LIAM WITHNAIL, 25, a stand-up comedian from Edinburgh, and his girlfriend

Danielle* broke up in December after six months together

It's a normal day – a standard, run-of-the-mill, not-much-happening Sunday – when, bam! Out of nowhere I get a

text from Danielle. A text telling me she can't see me anymore. That she's still in love with her ex. I try to act with a degree of emotional maturity, telling her I want her to be happy.

Then, I head to the pub with my mate Gareth. He wants to talk about it, but I don't – I want to drink and drink and drink. And then I want to watch some wrestling. So we do that. Emotional maturity, see?

Over the next three days I learn that the stereotype of gin making women emotional 100% applies to men too. Then, as I sober up, the questions come. Who is this ex? I've never heard of him – is he even real?

I'm still Facebook friends with Danielle, and we follow each other >

WEEK Although I'm no longer thinking about Danielle all the *time*, I'm regularly reminded

of her. She looks a bit like Elsa from Frozen, which seems to be everywhere right now. If one more person tells me to, 'Let it go!' I'll flip.

I start having a recurring dream in which Danielle's dating Bradley Cooper. My friend points out that if my subconscious believes the only man a woman could possibly leave me for is Bradley Cooper, I have serious ego problems. This doesn't help.

What does help is a friend request from a girl called Sally*, who's seen me performing and asks me out for a drink. Our date, a couple of days later, is great - we chat, we laugh, it's romantic. But it doesn't feel right. She's not Danielle.

WEEK I feel a bit better now, partly thanks to having had no contact with Danielle, and

partly because I managed to go on a date and it wasn't a complete disaster although I don't think I want to see Sally again. If she texts me I'll tell her I think she's great – but that

I've got back with my ex.

• Liam is performing at the Glasgow Comedy Festival on 13 March. Follow him on Twitter @liamwithnail

T want to drink and watch some wrestling'

'SHE'S MOVED ON TOO FAST **ANTHONY HILTON, 30,** an account manager from Manchester, and Grace* broke up in

September after two years together

WEEK It's been nearly two months, but it's just hit me that we're over for good. Although I

wouldn't describe myself as brokenhearted, this is my first significant breakup, so the past few weeks have been a

mix of emotions – sadness, relief, worry about the future – but now the reality is sinking in. When Grace and I were just on a break, I bought a necklace to give her - and I've accepted that I'm going to have to send it back.

Looking on Facebook, I see Grace's friend has tagged her in a photo that says, 'Don't throw your hopes, dreams, old photos and ex's sweater down the toilet'. She adds that it reminds her of Grace getting rid of my stuff. I don't really understand, as we didn't part on bad terms, but it's not like I can ask her.

Everywhere, there are reminders of her. The Benicassim festival account on Instagram still posts pictures from the event we went to last summer; hearing The

Courteeners on the radio reminds me of the gig I was supposed to be going to with her. Even though I'm starting to think the split is for the best, I can't help wondering: will she begin to regret breaking up with me?

WEEK On a Saturday night out, I meet up with some mutual friends of ours. Of course,

they want to talk about the break-up. On the upside, I get chatting to a nice girl, although she's younger than me.

The next day, hung-over and feeling sorry for myself, I decide to email

Grace, telling her how much our two

years together meant to me. I know I shouldn't do it, but go ahead anyway. No reply.

The next day, I still haven't heard back, and I really regret sending the email. I get a few texts from the girl I met on Saturday - she wants to organise a date,

which is good news. But still, I avoid the pet aisle in the supermarket, because it would remind me of the cat I had with Grace...

WEEK Oh, god. One of my mates has texted me a picture from Grace's Instagram, and it looks

like she's met someone new. There's a sense of relief - finally, there's an explanation for what's happened. But mainly, I feel disappointed.

When we got together, she was weeks out of a relationship - has the same thing happened again? How can a girl who told me two months ago she wanted us to stay together forever, apparently be in a new relationship so soon?

A drunken night ends with me posting a Facebook status about her being with someone new. Unsurprisingly, I wake up to a couple of her friends having a go at me, and it's swiftly deleted.

That evening, I contact the shop I bought Grace's necklace from to tell them we've split up. Hopefully, I'll get my money back.

97 reminds me of the cat I had with Grace'

'I HOOKED **UP WITH SOMEONE**'

JIM*, 23, from London, and his girlfriend Rebecca* broke up in November after a

year together

WEEK I think I'm doing OK, although I've been out drinking a lot more than

usual. She'd been on my mind a lot, but today I realised I haven't thought about Rebecca for a day or so. But then my iPod shuffles on to an album that reminds me of her. It brings me down a bit, but I think I'm just looking at the past through rose-tinted glasses. On a Friday night out, I hook up with someone. I don't feel bad, but I don't feel great about it either. The next night, I get another girl's number – although I'm not sure if dating is worth my time

WEEK I go on a blind date suggested by a friend, but it's the most awkward experience I've ever had. Not as awkward, though, as visiting my best friend, who also happens to be Rebecca's best friend. The tension between us is hard to deal with. I've joined Tinder, but it's a bit superficial and just makes me appreciate the connection I had with Rebecca. Having said that, I think I'm coping fine.



WEEK OK, maybe not. Rebecca's messaged one of my friends asking to hang out with him.

It's annoyed me – partly because it's made me realise I'm not doing as well as I thought I was. The next day, it's still playing on my mind, so I head to the pub. I need to get away from the constant reminders. But at the same time, I'm ready to move on. I think.



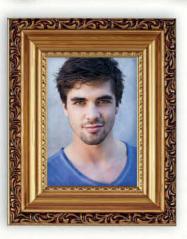












WHEN YOUR EXPICES YOUR NEXT TO THE WHITE TO THE WORLD TO THE WHITE TO THE WORLD TO

Who better to ask for dating advice than the man you, er, used to date? Siam Goorwich takes the plunge in her search for love...



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STYLIST





part from the odd fling,
I've been single for
the past seven years
– although not for
lack of trying. I
have perky, pouty
profiles on

countless dating sites and apps, I flirt my way through pubs and clubs, and have even let friends set me up on blind dates – all to no avail.

I have a habit of falling for the least suitable man in the room. And no matter how many times I realise that the good-looking guy with swagger is more likely to be interested in playing the field than enjoying cosy nights in, it's a lesson I never *quite* learn.

I'm starting to wonder if I'm incapable of finding myself a decent boyfriend without help. So when *Cosmo* hit on the idea of asking me to hand over the reins of my love life to someone who knows what I should be looking for – my ex – I was intrigued, to say the least.

Perhaps surprisingly, the experts say there may be method to this (apparent) madness. "Your ex may know you better than you know yourself – or at least the type of man who'd be good for you," says relationship psychologist Susan Quilliam. "He's put up with you during the bad times, benefited from your good side, and can be more objective about who you are and what you need."

I dated Nathan, 36, for two and a half years (my longest-ever relationship), and in my history of dating, he's a bit of an anomaly. Yes, he might have been wrong for *me*, but he's not a wrong' un.

We had some great times, but were moving in different directions, so I ended it. It wasn't easy but, happily, seven years later we're still friends. We don't see each other regularly (Nathan now has a long-term girlfriend and a

'I'M INCAPABLE OF FINDING MYSELF A DECENT BOYFRIEND'

daughter) – however, when we do, we always have a laugh. So maybe he really would be the best person to help me pick my next boyfriend?

Luckily, Nathan's a good sport. "I can't believe you've been single for so long," he says. "It's about time you found someone new!" Er, thanks, Nath!

THE PLAN

The idea is that Nathan and I will each pick a guy for me to date, and see which one I prefer. At best I might meet someone great; if not, at least I'll be forced to date outside my comfort zone.

I'm not a massive fan of online dating. I've been on a few dates and wasn't that impressed (it's so hard to tell if you've got chemistry from a profile), but this seems to be our best option, as dating someone Nathan knows in real life would just be *too* weird.

I'm already signed up to a few sites, so I give Nathan access to my profiles on Match.com, Okcupid.com and Mysinglefriend.com, as well as Tinder and a Jewish dating app called Jswipe (me being, well, Jewish).

As we browse (somewhat awkwardly at first – looking through dating sites with your ex isn't the most natural pastime), Nathan comes up with a list of qualities he thinks my man needs: "Intelligent, sporty (but not excessively), knows his own mind, interesting, creative (because you like to be inspired), has his own life and interests (because you're very independent); control freaks need not apply."

I'm amazed at how spot-on the list is, and how well Nathan knows me. I try not to box myself in with a list of must-haves, but the man he's described sounds pretty perfect. His input has refocused my

mind... in theory, at least.
Usually I like really confident,
alpha-male types, but I'm open
to someone less cocky.

Generally, I can rarely bring myself to read a person's online blurb if there's not a hint of physical attraction, but Nathan obviously doesn't have this problem. While I fall into my usual trap of dismissing people after a quick glance at their picture, especially if they're not slim-built, tall or >



Cosmo dating

fashionably dressed, he reads through dozens of profiles.

Despite being united on my 'perfect' man in theory, in reality we still clash. While at 32 I'm happy to date men up to 10 years older than me, Nathan thinks I should go for someone under 40, because he sees that as a massive milestone and if I'm going to be in a long-term relationship with someone, I should celebrate it with him. And I veto a couple of guys he thinks are perfect because I find them physically unattractive (one has really bad hair; another I just find plain ugly). Which is why we decide to carry on our searches separately.

MY CHOICE

After some hardcore mulling I choose a 32-year-old actor called Adam. He has a wide array of pictures on his profile, and although I'm not totally digging his long hair, he looks tall, dark and handsome. I have my doubts (I only fancy him in one picture, and don't really see myself with an actor... with the notable exception of Brad Pitt, obvs), but his profile states his parents are American and that, along with a mention of some volunteer work he's done, is enough to intrigue me.

Nathan has the same reservations I do – the hair and the job – but apart from that thinks he seems fine (although not someone he'd have picked himself).

NATHAN'S CHOICE

Nathan, meanwhile, chooses Brendan, 32, an IT worker. At first glance he's not my type *at all*. There's nothing wrong with him per se, but if I saw him in a bar, I wouldn't try to flirt. As I read his profile, though, I can see why Nathan thinks we'd be a good match. He seems like a nice, active, down-to-earth guy. In fact, on paper, he and Nathan seem quite similar. I'm pretty sure there won't be any physical attraction, but at least he seems decent.

I message both men to arrange the dates. Even online, there are signs Brendan is the better choice (incredibly frustrating for me – someone who always likes to be right...). While talking to Adam involves a perfunctory exchange, my chat with Brendan develops into a full-blown getting-to-





know-you conversation. He's warm and forthcoming, and I immediately feel at ease. All that's left to do is to road-test the men we've chosen...

DATE 1: BRENDAN

Despite arriving at the pub 15 minutes late, thanks to our chatty emails I'm feeling pretty relaxed. Brendan is halfway through a pint, but immediately heads to the bar to get me a drink. I've been on countless dates where men have hesitated over buying the first round – or, worse, not offered at all. I don't expect my date to bankroll the whole evening, but I think buying the first round is a gentlemanly gesture that sets a nice tone. So just a few minutes in, Brendan gets a tick.

For me, there's no chemistry but conversation flows and we have a laugh. Afterwards, he walks me to the train station – no kiss – and we share a few jokey texts once we're both home. In fact, he asks me on a second date, and although I doubt that he's The One, I've had a nice enough evening to say yes. Our next meeting confirms he's not the right man for me, but Brendan

Siam dated Brendan (top) and Adam – all in the name of research. But who came out on top?

really is one of the good guys.

DATE 2: ADAM

Two days after

my first date with Brendan, it's Adam's turn – and I already have doubts. When I suggested meeting on Thursday or Friday he'd replied, 'Thursday works, for now? For now? What does that mean? If we've arranged a date, then short of death I expect you to be there. Trust me to pick someone who can't even fully commit to a first date.

The date itself is short and... well, my cocktail was sweet, at least. When I arrive at the venue, Adam's at the bar. He has a cold, so he's not drinking. When I order a cocktail, he orders another glass of water... and then there's a pause, during which I realise he's not going to offer to pay.

We make pained conversation for an hour or so, during which time I realise I have no interest in him, and he has less in me. In the flesh, he's just not my type and I'm home by 9.30, alone – hardly a roaring success.

THE VERDICT

It seems pretty clear that when it comes to choosing me a date, my ex knows me better than I know myself. Brendan didn't give me the hots, but I really enjoyed spending time with him, and wouldn't hesitate to hook him up with a friend. I also learnt that when it comes to online dating, you have to look past profile photos. Nathan picked Brendan because he knew he had most of the attributes that really matter to me, and while it didn't work out, I had two nice dates with a really great guy, which can't be sniffed at.

As for Nathan – he's feeling pretty smug. Not only did I prefer my evening with his pick, but I went on a second date with him. I'm sort of relieved Brendan and I didn't hit it off better, or I'd never hear the end of it...

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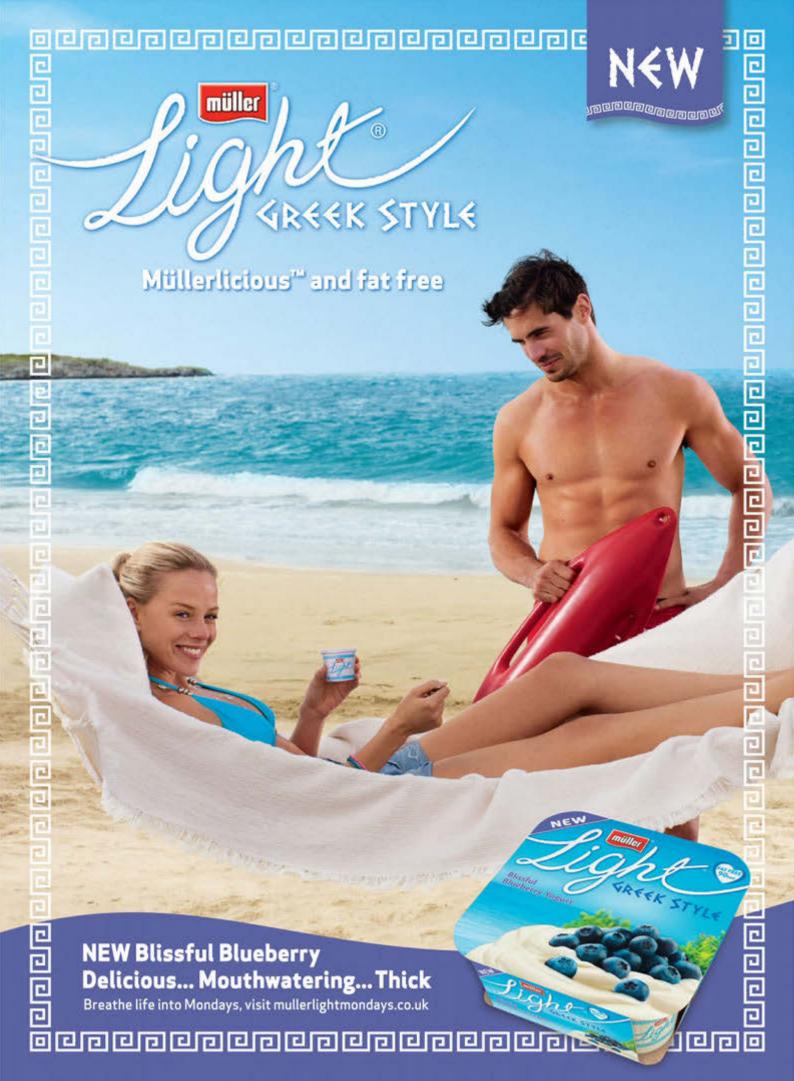
Party dresses,

BLLOOPS

ECCOMENTO * COMING * OUT

SULS style







t was 1998, I was 14 and I'd just told everyone I liked girls. In *that* way. Well, no, I tell a lie. I'd confided in my best friend, sworn her to secrecy, and it had spread at lightning speed around pretty much the whole of the south of

England. Once outed, though, I draped myself in rainbow scarves and bracelets to parade around my school corridors. I spent a lot of time being reprimanded by a teacher – ironically, the same teacher who was often seen around town with the close female 'friend' she apparently lived with.

Anyway, 1998 was the year no one would sit next to me in class in case they 'caught it'. Fortunately, the situation at home was more supportive. My parents have always been very liberal, so telling them didn't feel too scary – although Mum gently suggested I

might be a bit too young to have worked out my sexuality just yet.

Sadly, it wasn't quite so easy for some of my friends to do the same. Around the same time, one friend told her dad she was gay, and his response was to completely lose it and try to break her arm. There are no words.

Fast-forward four years to 2002, and I headed to university in London, carrying an increasingly urgent realisation: that my sexuality didn't just embrace girls. I was attracted to men too. Cue my next 'coming out' process, this time as a bisexual woman. Irritatingly, and despite my progressive surroundings, this turned out to be yet another can of worms.

I arrived at my uni's LGBT (lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender) society and was confidently informed by the first person I spoke to that I didn't exist. And so I discovered a whole new kind of prejudice existed, and still does, against

bisexuals. Many gay and lesbian people feel those who identify as bisexual are simply too scared to 'fully' come out.

Despite changing attitudes, coming out is still a very courageous thing to do, however you do it. Many people leave it until their late twenties at least – and that's absolutely understandable. There's no shame in waiting until you feel comfortable. However you approach your big moment, it should always be done when the time feels right for you. And as all LGBT people know, coming out is a continuous process. You have to prepare yourself for a range of reactions – you don't just jump on a chair as a teenager, shout, 'I'M GAY!' and then be done with it.

But I'm pleased to report that coming out is getting a lot easier for almost everyone. Celebrities including Ellen Page and Tom Daley have promoted taking this step as less 'shameful secret to be shared,' and more 'positive statement.' Many of these wild, wonderful, heartwarming and brave coming-out stories are going viral. Here are some of my favourite new ways to do it.

* Throw a *

After falling for a woman on a trip to LA last year, Chloe Marshall, 30, decided to make an occasion of telling her friends she was gay. "When I got home to London, I invited a few friends over to catch up and give them the big reveal," she says. "I went all out with rainbow balloons, rainbow cocktails, a rainbow cake and even a sexy rainbow dress. I was so nervous, but they reacted really positively. It was brilliant."

GONFUSE grandma

YouTuber Maressa D'Arezzo found fame when she filmed herself coming out to her grandmother, who launched into Spanish Inquisition-style questioning about exactly how lesbians have sex ("She kisses your hole?"). Seriously funny.

Show the world HOW GREAT YOUT LOS MARE

Twitter user @paleveil had thousands blubbing when he posted a screenshot of his 13-year-old brother coming out to his best mate via text. 'Bro, we have been friends for 3 years and I'm glad you told me', his friend's response read. 'Who the fuck cares what people are going to say? You're awesome no matter what bro and I'm proud that you're my best friend... As a bro I'm going to stick by you. Ain't nothing wrong with being gay.' Brilliant.



A 15-year-old girl known as Laurel came out to her parents by making them a garish cake emblazoned with the words 'I'm gay' – and the photos dominated everyone's Tumblr feed for days. Brave and creative.



In 2012 Jacob Rudolph, then 18, told his schoolmates he was gay while accepting a class award for best actor. His dad uploaded to YouTube a video of his speech, in which he declared, "I am what I am, and that's how I'm going to 'act' from now on," gaining more than two million hits. "The irony of receiving an acting award was that I'd been acting the part of 'straight Jacob," he says. "I knew I'd regret not taking advantage of that moment."

'NOT BEING ABLE TO ADMIT MY SEXUALITY MADE ME PHYSICALLY ILL

Singer Vicky Beeching, 35, from Kent, faced a tough decision that spelled major life readjustments



I grew up in a loving, conservative Christian family. Aged 13, I started writing and singing my own songs, which became

popular in American mega-churches, and at 23 I was signed to EMI's Christian record label. I relocated to Nashville, which was amazing. But inside, I was carrying a huge secret I couldn't tell anyone – that I'm gay.

I feared it would be the end of everything – my music career, my livelihood, maybe even my family. I attended church services where gay people were called 'sinful,' and I found this increasingly toxic.

After a decade of living with so much tension, my body couldn't take it anymore. As well as feeling exhausted, I developed a painful white mark on my forehead, where cells had turned to scar tissue. I got diagnosed with an autoimmune condition and had to quit work and move back to the UK so I could be treated with chemotherapy. While I was in hospital, I weighed up my life.

I decided I had to speak out about my sexuality – both for my own sake

and for the sake of others facing the same fears. It was hard for me because of the church, but there can be so many reasons coming out is a huge step – from a person's career to their family's attitudes. I broke the news to my parents last April. They were amazing – and made it clear that they loved me unconditionally.

A few months later, I contacted a journalist I knew and told her my story. The piece made the front page of two national papers, and provoked a conversation within the church about how LGBT people are treated.

Since coming out, life has been a huge readjustment. I no longer record Christian music, as the conservative audience wouldn't buy my albums. Instead, I'm becoming involved in LGBT activism.

Coming out is so liberating. You discover who truly loves you. In 30 years' time, I think we'll look back in disbelief that the church ever saw LGBT marriage as 'sinful'. It once condoned slavery, but now views that with embarrassment. I want my voice to be heard so that young Christians – and any other young people who are worried about coming out – don't have to go through what I suffered.

THE DARKER SIDE OF COMING OUT

Although when it comes to LGBT issues tolerance is growing, behind every heart-warming viral is a less positive story. In urban areas of the UK, around 30% of homeless people are LGBT, partly because of intolerance, while 86% of secondary-school teachers have observed incidences of homophobic bullying. Sian Lambert, women's programme coordinator for the Lesbian And Gay Foundation, agrees that

coming out isn't always as easy as the viral videos might suggest. "There's increasing LGBT visibility, and in a lot of ways coming out is getting easier," she says. "But people are doing so earlier, which brings its own problems – school can be a harsh environment. The main thing that hasn't changed is the fact that every LGBT person still has to come out multiple times. We are, sadly, usually assumed to be straight until proven

otherwise. We still have

a long way to go." ◆

PHOTOGRAPHS THOMAS WATTS. HAIR AND MAKEUP VICTORIA BARNES. STYLING JARED GREEN. PROP STYLIST CHARLIE WATKINS





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#Sorrymotsorry

We say sorry eight times a day, so why is it still the hardest word, asks Sophie Goddard?

hen was the last time you said sorry? Today? Stats say we utter the S-word up to eight times a day. Women use the word twice as often as men, apologising for pretty much everything - whether it's, 'Soz, I'm not free tonight, or, 'Sorry for texting back late. We even apologise when it's not our fault, like when somebody walks into us on the street (don't pretend you haven't done it). But while we're overusing the word, it seems we're still a nation with serious sorry issues - because when it comes to heartfelt apologies (the ones needed when we've really messed up), we're useless. And it may be harming our friendships, relationships and careers.

Thanks to being glued to gadgets (stats say we're now online for 30 hours a month, with some of us spending more time on our devices than we do asleep), experts say we're increasingly shying away from face-to-face confrontation. In 2015, we're more likely to ask somebody out via a social-networking site than we are face to face, and the same goes for grovelling. Picture the scene: you totally forgot your best mate's birthday. What's easier - a quick Facebook message begging forgiveness, or facing her upset in person? The same goes for when we mess up at work - it's way less hassle to fire off an email than visit your boss's office.

It's not just us Brits struggling. In Japan they've launched 'apology agencies, which allow you to send a face-to-face 'apologiser' to do your dirty work. Surely things have gone too far when we're paying a complete stranger to say soz, non? Plus, isn't it missing the point? Having a stranger apologise for you doesn't exactly scream, 'Please forgive me!'

Therapist Caroline Carr says all this is painting a pretty sorry ('scuse the pun) picture. "Confronting somebody you've

> upset is never fun, but tackling issues head-on is key to maintaining And with the majority of us reacting favourably to heartfelt apologies both personally and professionally (research says customers respond better to companies who say 'sorry' than to those offering financial compensation), isn't it about time we all got out of this

Messed up royally? Here's Caroline's advice on how to deal

Only say it when you mean it. An apology acknowledges you've upset somebody, and shows you're willing to take responsibility for it. Saying, 'I'm sorry you feel that way' when you don't regret your behaviour will only get the other person's back up.

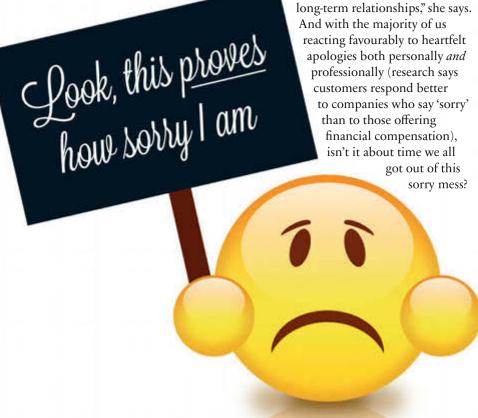
Avoid an ambush. Pick your time carefully. Suggest going for coffee to let the other person know beforehand you want to talk; don't suddenly approach them at their desk. Face-to-face delivery is ideal, but if it's not possible, a sincere letter or email is second best. Phone calls aren't great - you can't see their reaction and you're easily distracted.

O Don't leave it hanging. Letting it fester means resentment can grow. If it's a small mistake, apologise as soon as possible, clearing the air. Something more serious? Give yourself time to think an apology through. A rushed, 'Sorry, I didn't mean it' sounds empty and will probably antagonise them. Try writing a draft apology first - or run it past somebody you trust.

Go low. Looking too overpowering or aggressive creates unnecessary hostility. If they're sitting down, join them at their level - don't tower over them. Hold your hands firmly and confidently, don't fidget, and focus on your delivery, maintaining eye contact throughout.

Don't talk at them. This should be a discussion, not a speech. First, explain why you did what you did to make it clear you know why you're sorry. Say, 'I realise what I did might have been hurtful and I feel bad about that - this is why it happened.' Then apologise. Admit you were wrong and make it clear you'd like to move on. Ask them how you can make it right - and do it (within reason).

Accept their response - even if it's negative. If you've really upset somebody, they might not be prepared to move on immediately. Give it time and don't expect forgiveness straight away. Respect their decision, and make it clear that this won't happen again.





You practised your answers, nailed that smart-yetstylish look and had a zinging rapport with the interviewer. So why didn't you get the job? Sadly, we can't ace every interview – but we can learn from the mistakes we might not even have realised we made. We asked 15 employers about the interviews that stick in their minds – for all the wrong reasons...

"We like our candidates to show personality, and in fact one of the worst things you can do is to try to be perfect. One candidate was so polished, when we tried to get him to relax he couldn't drop the prepared speeches. I didn't get a personal impression of him, which put me off. I want to see passion, grit and flair – it's not enough just to be competent."

Natasha Teskey, head of talent acquisition at Austin Fraser recruitment agency

"Our employees need to be easy-going and flexible as we work across several different sites. When one candidate insisted (unlike every other employee) that he'd need his own desk at every office he worked in, we knew he wasn't going to fit in."

Estelle Roux, global head of people operations at Cloudreach

Don't try to be too clever

"It's good to stand out, but sometimes you can be a bit too clever. When I asked for an example to prove a candidate could think on his feet, he announced he was a magician and started to perform a trick. It didn't work, and basically amounted to him setting fire to a deck of cards in my bin. I told him I thought we'd better call it a day." Ben Broughton, director at Premier Group recruitment agency

Don't do something you can't pull off "We often ask candidates to prepare a presentation, and one girl chose to do it about her favourite book – Fifty Shades Of Grey. It was a brave decision, and she could have pulled it off if it'd been funny, but it wasn't. She was

too nervous to carry it off – she realised it was a bad idea halfway through, but had to plough on to the bitter end. Unless you *know* you can nail something edgy, it's best to play it safe." Jake Hayman, founder of personalised framing service Frame Again

Don't forget your homework
"One girl came in and knew nothing about the company.
When I asked why she wanted to work in this industry, she replied, 'Jewellery's great'. Where's the passion and drive in that?" Amber Atherton, founder and CEO of jewellery brand Myflashtrash.com

Don't be overconfident
"Confidence is great, but overconfidence can be a problem. By the third interview, one candidate was so relaxed she described something as 'like being on LSD' – hardly professional! Realising her

Land that job

Follow these five fail-safe rules from Microsoft's HR director Theresa McHenry and you can't go wrong...

- PREPARE I can't stress how vital this is.
 Understand the job, the organisation and the industry, and have something to say

 it shows you're interested.
- **BE YOURSELF** Good interviewers can tell if you're faking, and it's off-putting – we want to see the real you.
- BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE GOOD AT This is your chance to shine.
- ASK QUESTIONS Curiosity is the No.1 skill you need – it shows that you're willing to learn.
- **BE WELL PRESENTED** Your research should give you a clue about how to dress, but even if it's casual it's important to make an effort.

mistake, she got flustered and dug herself deeper into a hole. No matter how comfortable you feel, remember where you are." *Elizabeth Woodforde, manager* at Michael Page recruitment agency

Don't spoil it all by being careless

"After a first interview, we ask applicants to send us a mock press release. We had high hopes for one candidate, but her effort was full of spelling and grammar mistakes. One or two little errors are OK, but when it's riddled with them it shows a lack of care." Victoria Ruffy, founder and partner at Little Red Rooster PR

Don't give out the wrong message
"One guy seemed a good choice until we asked him why he wanted to work for us. His answer – 'Because my mum said I should' – didn't exactly inspire confidence!"

Jonathan Bond, director of HR and learning at legal firm Pinsent Masons

Don't publicly slag off the employer!

"The day after a group interview, we found out one of the candidates had blogged about it – scathingly. He'd named the company, made fun of the other interviewees, and said he didn't like the interviewer. Unsurprisingly, we didn't hire him."

Jenny Biggam, co-founder of media agency the 7 stars

Don't become a nuisance
"One interviewee was so pushy, she came off as desperate. She wasn't experienced enough, and I told her that when she asked for feedback. She then sent a huge email questioning the decision – eventually, she became a pest. It was a shame, because she might have been perfect for another role with us, but her attitude was off-putting."

Carrie Baldock-Apps, people director at cosmetics company Lush

Don't be ignorant about the company
"We look for people with passion and drive who really love >

Don't forget good manners are important

"We had an awesome candidate with a great CV and all the right skills. Three interviews in, I saw no reason not to hire her – until our receptionist told me the candidate had been rude to her. That showed me she probably wasn't a very nice person." *Tiffany Lathe*, *vice-president at web-hosting company Rackspace*

Don't send them to sleep "The worst thing you can do in an interview is be dull. Interviewers see so many candidates – if you're trotting out the same answers as everyone else, you won't stand out. I've even seen

colleagues fall asleep when interviewing people! Be honest, be yourself and be different." Alex Flatman, head of recruitment at legal firm Osborne Clarke

Don't be unenterprising "Despite having our profiles and photos up on our site, and even though he'd been told the name of the person who'd be interviewing him, one candidate asked our managing director, 'So, what's your role in the company?' If you can't even be bothered to find out who's interviewing you, we'll assume you're not that bothered about the job, either." Karen Varnarvas,

Don't second guess what they're looking for

head of HR at design agency Foolproof

"Some people see our brand and think they should come in and ramp up the quirk factor. They rave about things they think we'll like, or about *everything*. We don't want that – we want authenticity. There's space for the introverts too."

Sam Davey, recruiter at Innocent Drinks



RADIO 1'S
CLARA AMFO

"I've got a yellow purse from
Topshop – yellow's my favourite
colour. I've had it for a couple of
years now – it's lasted well! I have a
tendency to overstuff my purse, so
I try to empty it every day. At the
moment it's holding my Nando's,
Superdrug and bank cards. I'm a

Peek in the

"Scrimping for three years to buy my flat has turned me into a saver, but I'm a spendthrift at heart. I've learnt to shop smart, investing in

contactless convert, but I do try to

carry around a tenner in change.

timeless pieces rather than buying whatever I fancy. Trainers are my vice – I've got about 50 pairs of Nikes. And the last thing I *really* splashed out on was an Alexander McQueen handbag – I *love* it, and I plan to use it all the time! For basics, I'm a high-street girl – I like to think I'm a fairly savvy shopper."



Cosmo's resident superwoman solves your work dilemmas



"I currently work fulltime in publishing but want to make the switch to freelancing

so I can have more control over my time and be my own boss. I'm finding it slow to get going, though. How can I get myself out there?" *Ellen*, 30, *London*

KARREN SAYS Moving to freelancing can be tough if you're used to structure and a regular income – so make sure you set your goals and be clear in your mind about what you want to achieve.

The first few months will be difficult – as great as working from home is, finding the motivation can be hard. At first, for most freelancers, it's feast or famine, so you've really got to be driven – put all of your energy into this and realise that you're fighting for your livelihood.

The key is to network and promote yourself. Talk to old contacts and make it clear that you're willing to do work straight away. Explain how experienced you are and provide good references.

Make sure your LinkedIn page is up to date and that your business is easy to find. Now's the time to put in the groundwork,

but if you do it right you'll have a business to be proud of.



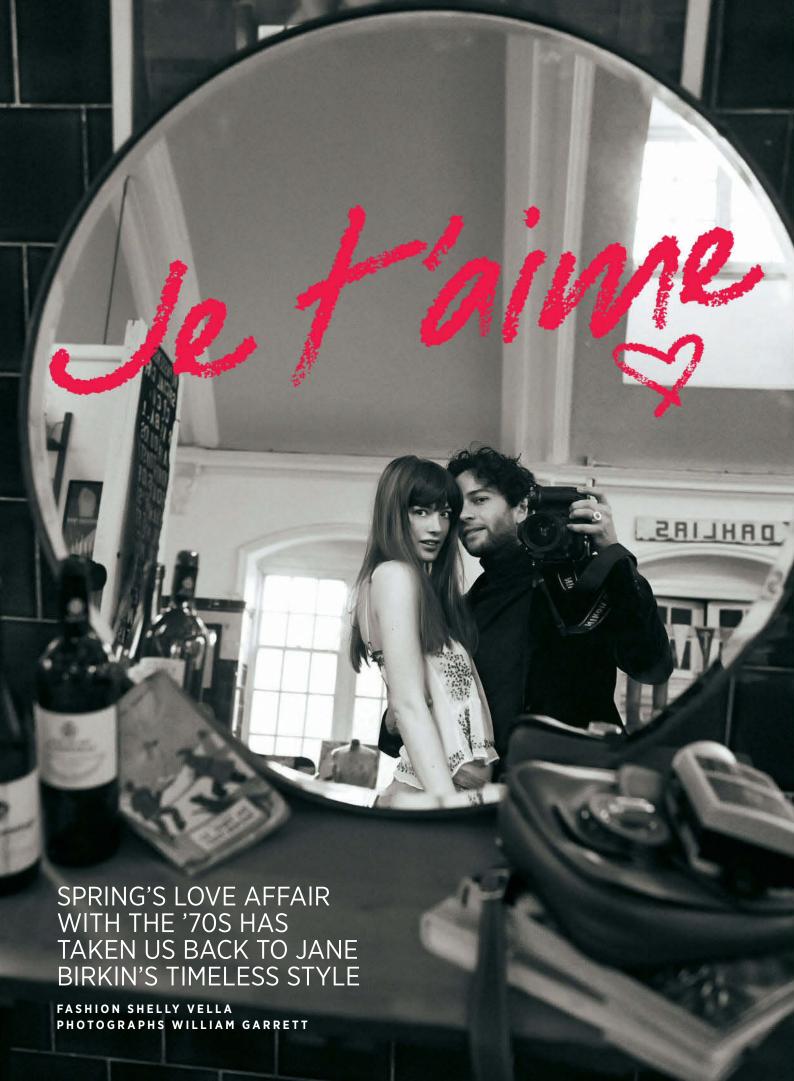
HAVE YOU GOT A WORK DILEMMA?

Fuzeet us @CosmopolitanUK using #KB, or email questionforkarren@hearst.co.uk



them getting 100% of the vitamin D they need for normal bone development. Introducing

Cow & Gate Growing Up milk. Find out more at cowandgate.co.uk/products.















OPPOSITE PAGE Coat, £795; shirt, £125; jeans, £145, all Michael Michael Kors. Shoes (just seen), £490, Mulberry THIS PAGE Waistcoat, £215; shirt, £89; trousers, £220, all Thomas Pink. Tie, £10, Topman. Ring, as before > 97





Annabeth wears: Cape, £99.95, Massimo Dutti. Shoes, £490, Mulberry. Bag, £425, Coach. Nick wears: Jacket, £695, Blk Denim. Shirt, £89, Thomas Pink. Jeans, £80, Levi's

Hair Jonothon Malone at Lovely Management. Makeup Frances Prescott at One Represents. Nick's styling Alexandra Lunt. Models Annabeth at Select Models, Nick at Storm Models. Inspired by Jane & Serge by Andrew Birkin (£34.99, Taschen).



THIS PAGE Khaki jacket, £38; jacket, £49; trousers, £24, all Dorothy Perkins. Jumper, £28; ring, £7, both River Island

OPPOSITE PAGE Dress, £395, DKNY. Shoes, £270, Day Birger et Mikkelsen. Clutch (around neck), £395, Lulu Guinness. Bracelet, £170, Eddie Borgo ➤



THIS SPRING, FASHION IS FULL OF GRAPHIC CUTS, PRECISION PRINTS AND CLEVER COLOUR PLAY



Top, £29, Atterley Road. Trousers, £160; necklace, £45; bracelet, £35, all 2nd Day. Shoes, £155, F-Troupe. Bag, £225, LK Bennett





Jacket, £25; skirt, £25, both Boohoo. Top, £28, River Island. Boots, £60, Aldo



Dress, £89, Monsoon. Boots, £60, Aldo. Clutch, £295, Lulu Guinness. Bracelet, as before ➤



Jumper, £145, 2nd Day. Skirt, £395, Rejina Pyo. Shoes, £425; clutch, £475, both Christian Louboutin. Ring, £12.50, Freedom at Topshop



Top, £32; trousers, £40, both Asos. Jumper (worn underneath), £14.99, H&M. Ear cuff, £30, Thomas Sabo. Bracelets, from £95, Eddie Borgo

Hair Heath Massi at Frank Agency, using Hair Rehab London. Makeup Lisa Valencia at Carol Hayes, using Kryolan. Model Hilda Lee at Next Models. Fashion Coordinator Holly Coopey.































Get ready to swoo<mark>n, ladies, bec</mark>ause the new collection from Very.co.uk is about to drop. Think effortlessly cool, chic and brimming with wardrobe staples

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Catwalk to curvy

JEANS SHOPPING SORTED!

Laura Puddy takes the pain out of searching for the perfect pair

inding and buying jeans can seem daunting, so I've compiled my top tips on how to shop for them and what's new this season.

Where to start

Know what you want from your jeans – are you after a pair you can wear to any occasion? A casual pair? A pair that holds you in? Once you decide what you want to achieve, it makes the process much easier.

Combat woes

If, like me, you're an hourglass or have a more voluptuous butt and hip area, you've got to get the hip-to-waist ratio right for a good fit. So, your jeans need to be tight enough on the waist yet roomy enough for your hips and bum. High-waisted styles with stretch are perfect for this – they're cut to sit snug around the waist yet have enough give to accommodate your booty.

New technologies

• Spanx now does jeans! Using the same technology, the jeans contour curves by shaping the waist and tummy area and slimming thighs.

PHOTOGRAPH TOM WATSON, HAIR AND MAKEUP VICKY BARNES

Laura wears:

T-shirt, £32,

Asos White.

Jeans, £42,

Laura's own

Topshop. Shoes

and jewellery,

 Sick of denim wrinkling at the knees? Well, New Look jeans now feature 'stretch and recovery' technology, so saggy knees are history!

• With amazing denim innovations this season, from fade-resistant dyes to high-stretch fabrics, Marks & Spencer has something for everyone. The 'sculpt and lift' jeans are my favourite; they not only retain their shape,

Which style?

but special backstitching serves to lift the bum too!

Flattering on everyone, skinnies are my go-to. From super-stretch jeggings or a fitted slim-leg style, skinnies are the perfect base for any look; it's all about styling them up and picking the right amount of stretch. Fabric should give enough to accommodate you, but also hold you in. Flares are a great option and are back with a vengeance for S/S15! Better with heels, they elongate the legs and are perfect for balancing out your shape. For a relaxed look, try boyfriend jeans. They're amazing on all body shapes, but be aware of the fit - slimmer legs or tapered options are more flattering than really baggy styles.

Style up

- Try customising a simple knee slash, heavy rips or a turn-up. Play around with what works for you.
- Remember proportions

 if you have tight jeans on,
 you can wear something less
 fitted on top and vice versa.
- For flares, try tucked-in tops to create a '70s-inspired streamlined look. With skinnies, try a tunic-style top or boyfriend-fit T-shirt.

Shopping tips

- Don't worry what the size is, go for what fits and always try on jeans before you buy.
- Be aware that stretch jeans will give, so buy them snug.

The best jeans — for curves —



Follow Laura @Stylaura



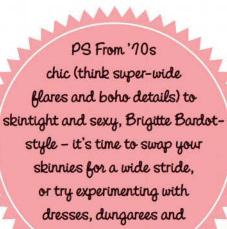
Instaglam



Shirt, £40, Warehouse. Skirt, £45, Oasis. Shoes,



Dress, £39, Miss Selfridge



separates.



Culottes, £40, Oasis





Skirt, £35, Miss Selfridge



STYLING ALEXANDRA LUNT, PHOTOGRAPHS BEN RIGGOTT, HAIR AND MAKEUP CAMILLA HEWITT AT S MANAGEMENT, USING TIGI BEDHEAD AND BOBBI BROWN. MODEL OLGA AT M+P MODELS



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66 Skin looks more radiant, thank you Clarins" Twickers

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I couldn't be without it"
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*Source: The NPD Group Jan-Oct 2014.

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Inkwear Falling Stars Temporary Tattoos, £2.49

DREAMY DETAIL

Think: A post-workout glow, fake freckles and some cheeky tattoos

OWN THE LOOK

Max Factor makeup artist Pat McGrath layered foundation and illuminating product on her models' skin using her fingertips for a polished finish, then wiped the cheeks clean to reveal a natural flush. Confused by contouring? Dust a bit of matt bronzer or deep pink blush along the hollow of the cheek to create some flattering shadow. Preen models had freckles drawn on using brown-toned eye pencils before hitting the catwalk. Or try dotting fake tan on your nose and cheeks using the pointed end of a tail comb – totally rainproof and they'll fade naturally!

Topshop Freckle Pencil in Forever Young, £5

What's #trend

Max Factor

Crème Puff

Blush In Nude

Mauve, £8.99

#nails

SKY INSPIRED

OMMY HILFIGER

Think: Cloudless cobalt to stormy grey

CONON THE LOOK

Founders of Rococo Nail Apparel, the Walker sisters, told us they'd lost count of the number of bottles of Utility Crème requested by fashion magazines for their spring/summer shoots – proof that grey is here to stay! If eye-catching colour is more your style, go for the bold blue used at the androgynous Reed Krakoff show. For Suno, nail artist Honey mixed two Maybelline shades to create her milky blue, but we've found a close match in Deborah Lippmann's Blue Orchid shade.

Rococo Nail Apparel Nail Polish in Utility Crème, £12





Deborah Lippmann Nail Lacquer in Blue Orchid, £16









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FEEL FLIRTY FRESH

Give in to your desires and spoil yourself with some sexy lingerie - and a new sensual scent from Surf

ant to add extra sizzle to your sex life? The key to feeling desirable in the bedroom is confidence, and nothing gives you confidence like wearing gorgeous lingerie. Whether you want to be a red-hot siren or fancy a more enticingly demure look, we have the answer to spice things up. Check out The *Cosmopolitan 50* Shades of Lingerie Show, sponsored by Surf, for all the inspo you need to sex up your underwear drawer. Once you've found the perfect look for you, wash your delicates with the new Limited Edition Flirty Shades Of Surf – it'll add a sensual scent to your lingerie to get you (and that someone special) in the mood. Its unique blend of alluring rose, a hint of jasmine and infusion of spicy sandalwood is sure to get your senses tingling. So ditch the candles and rose petals, and add Surf to your shopping list for some added excitement in your sex life!

Whatever
your style, check
out these luscious
lingerie sets
to tickle your
fancy...



a classic seductive colour combo







Limited Edition Flirty Shades Of Surf liquid, RRP £4.85*

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Add a touch of naughtiness to your sheets with new Limited Edition Flirty Shades Of Surf. Available in capsules (RRP £5.12)* and liquid (RRP £4.85)*, find it in all major supermarkets - but hurry, it's only in stores until April. For more information on this new bedroom essential, visit Surf.co.uk.

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washing liquid,

RRP £4.85*



TOP 5 FLIRTY TIPS FROM SURF

- Only wear what you feel happy and comfortable in. If you feel sexy, you'll be sexy, which makes it easier to have a lot more fun!
- Sizes differ greatly between brands, and also vary depending on the style of lingerie you're buying. Make sure to try on a few different sizes to always ensure you get the best fit - and remember, size is just a number.
- Work with your body shape to highlight those areas you're proud of. If you love your bum, showcase it in a thong; if you've got great boobs, make sure to flaunt them.
- Shapewear doesn't have to be boring. It now comes in saucy styles, perfect for creating a smooth silhouette and erasing small imperfections to
- give you added confidence so sculpt and shape your way to sexy!
- If in doubt, classic black will always looks chic. Think of it as the little black dress of your lingerie drawer - timelessly glamorous for every occasion.



FIND YOUR DOWN BIGGEST WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST

IT DOESN'T IT SLIPS **IT SHOWS** 0 0 0 0 1 1 0 0 0 0 W W IT LOOKS OFF BY **UP MY LOOK NATURAL** CAKEY **ENOUGH** LUNCHTIME **FINE LINES** Are you willing to Is your Do you skin have dry invest in a kick-ass, wrinkle-busting oily? skin? wonder? Yes Forget your powder prejudice: Bobbi Brown Yes Hell, Skin Weightless Powder No, but it yeah! Foundation, £33, comes needs a bit in 20 shades and wears more glow flawlessly. And acneprone? Dolce & Gabbana Perfect Reveal Lift Foundation, £48, **RMK Creamy** MÉTÉORITE! has gold silk extract Foundation N. Not Oxygenetix to turn back time. No £36, is packed Acne Control really with plant oils Oxygenating Elizabeth for day-long Foundation, £52, Arden dewiness. is clinically Flawless Finish proven to both Perfectly Satin Just a conceal and heal 24hr, £29, Nah, I just little bit your skin. Pricey, mops up oil want to but worth it. throughout hide stuff Debelo fasia Jack the day. Guerlain Météorites Baby Glow, £35.50, lights up tired, Or try Anything stressed skin this total cheaper? Rimmel Revion Colorstay Makeup and smells divine. bargain London Combination/Oily Skin. I could do Lasting £12.49, is brilliantly with a little Finish 25hr natural-looking and adjusts Foundation, to skin's changing oil levels. firming too KIKC £7.99 You need a long-lasting By Terry Terrybly Don't long-wear Anti-Wrinkle Serum all-rounder foundations feel with medium Foundation, £75, leaves skin looking a bit heavy? coverage CLARINS fit and firm. **Bourjois Healthy** Clarins Mix Foundation, **Kiko Unlimited** Not these days. Nars £9.99, has added All Day Luminous Everlasting Foundation, £13.90,

Foundation +

SPF15, £27.50

laute Tenue

fruit extracts to make

your skin zing!

has some clever

wrinkle-blurring tech.

Foundation, £33, is

especially feather-light.

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We guide you through the foundation maze towards complexion perfection...

DASE seconds

BUGBEAR WITH FOUNDATION?



Instaglam Next,

DECIDE YOUR Undertone

Many brands,
including L'Oréal
Paris, Mac and Bobbi
Brown, group their
foundations
according to
undertones, which
can help you zero
in on your most
flattering shade.
Here's the trick:

LOOK AT
THE VEINS ON
YOUR WRISTS.
WHAT COLOUR
ARE THEY
MOSTLY?



Blue and purple

YOU HAVE A

UNDERTONE



Green

VOU HAVE A

UNDERTONE



A mix of both

YOU HAVE A

UNDERTONE

Then, CHOOSE YOUR Shade

Pick two or three shades that look like the best contenders. Draw a stripe of each on your upper jawline – the right one will seem to disappear into your skin. Do this in daylight or by a window if you can. Ideally, get a sample to try at home – the best test is in the morning, all over, on a clean face!



Finally, apply LIKE A pro

Bobbi Brown pro artist Hannah Martin shares her rules for a flawless base...

Apply under-eye concealer first. This should mean you need less foundation all over than you thought.

Proundation sticks are brilliant. Just add a few swipes across your chin, cheeks and forehead and blend quickly with your fingertips for on-the-go beauty.

For liquids, use a flat foundation brush. Start at the centre of your face and blend outwards. You

don't need to blend right to the jawline unless you have imperfections.

For powders, use a small brush to get into all the crevices and around your nose. Then use a sponge (they often come with powder foundations) in a smooth, patting motion for extra

coverage where

you need it.

COSMO

BY KATE TURNER. PHOTOGRAPHS PA PHOTOS. STILL LIFES HEARST STUDIOS

Barry

STAIN PAINT IN Absolute Burgundy

GET THE LOOK

FOR FOR OPULENT EYES STARRY EYED PALETTE

Barry M.









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ULTRA MOISTURISING Lip Paint in Cranberry Red



Rock goddess and face of Black XS Be A Legend **Debbie Harry** has some sound beauty advice

Step away from the mirror

I wasn't a girly little girl "It surprised me the other day because my godson said he'd dressed up his little sister as a boy, and I almost started crying because it suddenly struck me that my mother had always dressed me as a little boy. I think that's because I

was always out playing in the dirt. I was one of those messy kids."

I sort of grew into my looks "Pre-teen I started thinking that I looked maybe OK. Brigitte Bardot was an inspiration – she had this huge messy mop of hair,

and in those days nobody had messy hair. She had a rough edge, and I found I liked the way 'bad' things can look good. That was a big lesson. Then I guess when boys started entering the picture I became pretty... you know. It's their fault! Not my fault!"

Social media is making people looks-obsessed. "I find it worrying because everyone is so focused on the visual, on having a lot of images of themselves. And yet everyone wants to look the same: Chris (Stein, her band- and soulmate) says the more selfies he sees, the less he remembers any of the people in them. There comes a point when you have to say, 'Turn off the light and get away from the mirror.'"

I never worked out my 'camera face'

"I was usually horrified. I love Chris's pictures of me, and I've worked with some incredibly beautiful, wonderful photographers, but it's equal between the eye of the beholder, the eye of the photographer and the subject. Some of the best-loved images of me that Chris shot, including the one with the





Debbie Harry loves...



mirrored aviators that everyone always seems to respond to, were done really casually. And he never retouched or cropped them. If you try to control every last image of you, the result will just be anodyne."

Being sexy and empowered came naturally to me "I think that's because

I positioned myself in a band, not as a solo artist. It's harder for girls in that position because they become more of an object, almost a showgirl – in spite of maybe writing lyrics that are important to them. But, you know, there just aren't that many girls like Gaga, Sia or St Vincent – whom I love – who can actually be a musician and an artist and be distinctive."

Being pretty is like a drug "So you know I must be hooked because I keep working for it. But you have to know when to stop

dissecting and analysing your looks. It's more important to fight for your health, and to keep a young mindset."

I'm obsessive about physical fitness

"It's a real discipline for me; for anyone really. To get up in the morning and do those things that hurt your body. I don't know what the hell my trainer makes me do but it's awful! But in the long

run it's great, for your brain as well.

Everyone has to deal with
depression and moments of
doubt and that's a really good
way to fight it."

I don't live within the rules of feminine behaviour "In relation to men I'm not the kind of 'Ohh, I can't do that!' kind of girl. I'm independent. I don't get caught up in posing and looking cute, and I'm not worried about making a fool out of myself. Physically I'm

Still

stunning after all

these

not a petite fleur; I'm very feminine but athletic I suppose. I'm a muscular babe."

T'm sort of horrified to think I'm a style icon "The only reason that I became stylish was because of [the late designer] Stephen Sprouse. He sort of solidified a look for me. One time we were living in [New York's] Little Italy and my coat got stolen, and I ended up wearing this raggedy sheepskin with no sleeves and just a big belt – like a sweater – and it just became a look. It was rugged and it looked great."

I mostly did my own makeup back in the day "But the really great looks were created by artists like Stephen. It was like he was drawing on a piece of paper with a Sharpie but it was on my face. His things were so extreme but they worked."

In the '70s, I didn't have money for perfume "What was my scent back then? I don't really remember. The fresh thing to say would be cat piss. Or Bowery [the then-seedy New York area where she hung out]." •

Afterno

e all love time with our closest girl friends, but when life gets in the way, it can be hard to meet up as often as we'd like. So here's the ultimate excuse: Cosmo has teamed up with Baileys to celebrate the magic that happens when girls get together, with a fab afternoon of pampering for you and your friends. Enjoy an indulgent afternoon tea, plus tons of beauty treats including blow-dries, manicures and more, in one of London's smartest venues, overlooking the Thames. But if you can't make it, don't let that stop you having the girls over for afternoon tea at yours! Tempt your friends with some of these tasty home-made treats...



• DATE & TIME • 28 March 2015 2pm-5pm

• VENUE •

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Ontea with the one of the one of

It's the ultimate indulgent day out you won't want to miss...

BAILEYS BAKED CHEESECAKE

Because who doesn't love cheesecake?

- ➤ Crush 110g oat biscuits and mix with 25g melted butter.
- ➤ Press the mixture firmly into a cake tin and bake for 20 mins at 200°C, then leave it to cool. That's your buttery biscuit base sorted.
- Mext up, whisk 250g mascarpone with 200g fromage frais until smooth, then add 2 large eggs and 40g caster sugar and whisk again. In a glass bowl over a saucepan of simmering water, gently melt 100g dark chocolate and add it to the mixture with 50ml Baileys Original Irish Cream. Pour this onto the base and bake at 150°C for 1hr 15mins. When the time's up, turn off the oven but don't take it out until

it's cool – this pro tip should keep your cake from cracking. > All that's left to do now is drizzle chocolate sauce, cream, coffee beans, or

whatever tasty topping you

fancy on top, and tuck in! O.1 alcohol units per slice



BAILEYS CHOCOLATE ORANGE CUPCAKES

Totally simple, totally delish

- ➤ Preheat the oven to 190°C and line a cupcake tray with 12 paper cases.
- ➤ Mix together 250g plain flour, 3tsp baking powder, ½tsp salt, 125g caster sugar and a little fresh orange rind.
- Then, in a separate bowl, whisk together 225ml Baileys Irish Cream With Orange Truffle, 1 egg and 90ml vegetable oil. Pour this into the dry mixture and stir. Divide the lot between your bun cases and bake for 30mins until golden brown.

 While your cupcakes cool,
- melt 300g dark chocolate in a bowl over a pan of simmering water, then stir in 200ml Baileys Irish Cream With Orange Truffle. Beat until



it's thick and cool, spread (or pipe, if you're feeling fancy) over the cupcakes, and enjoy!

0.5 alcohol units per cupcake

BAILEYS CHOCOLATE MACAROONS

To seriously impress your friends



➤ Beat 2 large egg whites, then gradually fold in 120g sugar until the mixture is shiny and stiff. Mix 50g ground almonds with 1tbsp cocoa powder and gently fold this into the egg-white mix.

➤ Spoon it all into a piping bag and squeeze about 60

3cm blobs onto a baking tray

lined with baking paper. Now flatten each dollop with the side of a knife and bake them at 180°C for 15 minutes. Once done, set aside to cool.

➤ For the filling, warm 100ml Baileys Original Irish Cream and grate 150g ready-made dark chocolate ganache into the liquid, stirring until it melts. Lastly, add **50g butter** in small chunks, and allow to cool until it's a nice smooth piping consistency.

➤ Give the mixture a good stir, pour it into a piping bag, and dollop a little onto 30 of your macaroons. Sandwich them up with the other halves, and you're done! Seriously impressive and easy.

0.1 alcohol units per macaroon





COLD SORES AND ME

Cosmo's Fashion Coordinator Holly Coopey opens up on refusing to let cold sores crush her confidence

or as long as I can remember, cold sores have been the bane of my existence. My mum tells me I had them even when I was a tiny baby, but it wasn't until the start of secondary school that I started to get them a lot more often, and in their masses.

There are so many misconceptions with this virus: that you have them everywhere if you get them on your mouth (genital herpes, we're looking at you); that you can infect someone just by breathing near them; that it's curable. ALL untrue. Another thing people don't know about the herpes virus is that it's related to the chickenpox virus - which is dormant in all of us who have had the pox. My mum is the only other member of my immediate family who suffers. My two elder sisters and dad have never had a cold sore – and I've shared drinks,, kisses, cuddles and bitch slaps with all of them. I've also had long-term boyfriends who have never suffered.

Between the ages of 14 and 21, I had a cold sore (or five) once a month at the very least. If you find This is above average, and someone's usually people have one cold sore gross, trigger – it could be imagine how harsh sunlight, poor diet, stress, illness or they feel - and just a bad reaction to lipstick. Unluckily for me, everything is a trigger. If I'm overtired, stressed, poorly, or if I even scratch my lip by accident, within 24 hours I could have six of them – sometimes even inside my nose. It ain't pretty!

I went through a foolish stage of trying to cover them with makeup, which only makes them worse and can cause them to spread further.

I'm now 25, and I think I've heard every silly story there is to hear about cold sores. And I take offence at all of them. Cold sores are the most irritating, painful, demoralising and plain horrible little beasts that can appear on your face without notice and wreak havoc on your self-esteem. I'm fully aware that many people live with much more serious, life-shattering ailments, but I tell you - cold sores are little blighters from the second they start tingling under your skin.

I've tried everything, from creams and tablets to light machines and tonics. Some things work better than others, but eventually the virus gets used to whatever it is and fights back. Right now, I take four 200mg aciclovir (the active ingredient in cold-sore cream) pills a day to prevent outbreaks, but I still get a bad breakout once every two to three months. I don't really rate 'invisible patches'. Although they do stop you touching the infection, they tend to irritate my skin when I'm removing them, which can make it worse. One thing I've found that works really well is a cream called Abreva, which you can get in the US or online for a hefty \$26 a tube (around £17). Worth every penny.

With a combination of these meds, a healthy diet (heavy on the greens), and the ability to know when they're coming so I can cream up, I definitely have more control over my breakouts now and I try not to let cold sores ruin any great plans. But I have been ridiculed and bullied a LOT over the

years and they've left me with

a very scarred lip line.

I avoid meeting new people or going on nights out when I have cold sores - they can completely knock my confidence, mostly because of people's misconceptions (no, I DO NOT HAVE FOOD

AROUND MY MOUTH).

karma is

a bitch'

Next time you see someone with a cold sore, do me a favour: don't stare at it, just pretend it's not there. If you find it gross, imagine how that person feels - and karma is a bitch.

So easy. So effective. So gentle. So no excuse not to take your make-up off.

#lovetakingitoff











PRODUCTS TO MAKE YOU FEEL THE LOVE

THIS MONTH WE'RE GETTING ALL LOVED UP WITH THE PRETTIEST V-DAY PRODUCTS AROUND

Nails Inc Alexa Hearts, £14

Forget fussy nail art, this topcoat with red heartshaped bits is the easiest way to bring true romance to your fingertips. One (thick) application is all you need; just make sure you spread it out well. Bridget, Online Beauty Editor



Guerlain Météorites Perles de Blush, £34,50

This cherub-painted pot contains the cult Météorites powder a mix of complexionboosting pearls scented with violets. Swirled together with a fluffy brush they give cheeks a loved-up flush. Kate, Beauty Editor



All (50 of them) named after boys, and so dinky you needn't commit to just one, these mini-lipsticks are rich, smooth and caring - just like some of our favourite men. Inge, Beauty Director



Friends fans, take a moment to appreciate the genius name of this bronze-and-blush combo. Sweep your brush over both to get an enviable first-flush-of-love glow. Oh, and remember... they were on a break! Cassie, Beauty Writer



Three's

Right now it's all about... cooking up your own custom blends



Givenchy Ange Ou Démon & Accord Illicite, from £63.50

This cheeky (yet innocent) scent now comes with its naughty little sister in tow: a 4ml bottle of pure perfume. Layer the heady mix of leather, musk, patchouli and vanilla under the original scent when you feel rebellious.



Concoction Customised Haircare, from £14

Inspired by mixology, you pick a base fragrance and add two 'SuperSerum shots' to create a bespoke 'ShampYou'. There are eight shots in total so you can give hair a colour boost, a moisture injection or even treat your roots and scalp if you fancy.



Odacité Pure Elements Collection, from £21

Add two or three drops of one of these super-concentrated serums to your moisturiser day and night to target specific skin concerns. Whether you've got clogged pores, or dry, sensitive, oily, combination or blemished skin, all issues are covered.





I've fallen hard for this shampoo. Not only does it smell amazing, it also treats my dry, coloured locks like no other. It's oh-sonourishing and leaves my hair looking freshly dyed and feeling like I've deep-conditioned it - just without the extra effort. It's my perfect match.

Lucy, Beauty Assistant

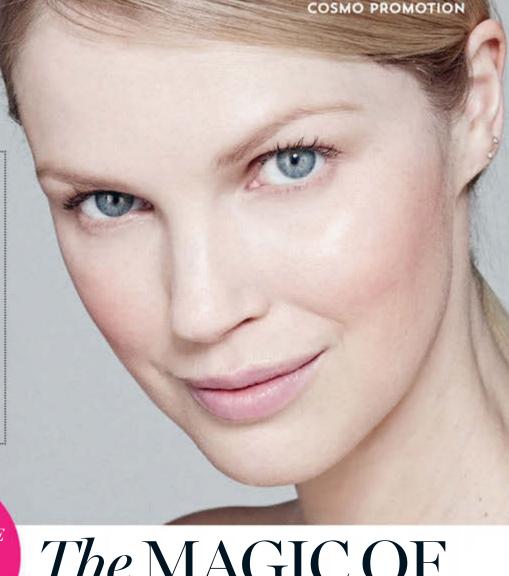
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WHAT IS GARNIER MICELLAR CLEANSING WATER?

- 1 It's a clever, hypoallergenic cleansing water containing no perfume, designed for sensitive skin.
- 2 It's a 3-in-1 cleansing routine in a bottle; it refreshes skin in the morning and removes make-up at night.
- **3** It comes in a generous 400ml bottle and leaves skin feeling refreshed, soothed and hydrated.



DESIGNED FOR SENSITIVE SKIN, LOVED BY ALL SKIN TYPES!



The MAGIC OF MICELLAR

Micellar waters have been the go-to cleansing product for make-up artists for years. Now, Garnier brings a new version of this trend to UK women

usy schedules are no longer a valid excuse for neglecting your cleansing routine. Introducing new Garnier Micellar
Cleansing Water. Simply apply this smart new cleanser onto a cotton pad and gently wipe across your skin, even on sensitive areas. It's effective yet gentle and there's no rinsing required. Sound too good to be true?

Garnier Micellar Cleansing Water has been designed for sensitive skin but is proven to be loved by all skin types. The molecules (micelles) act like dirt magnets, removing face, eye and lip make-up by lifting away dirt and impurities from the skin. No scrubbing or rubbing required... there's a reason why micellar cleansing waters have been the cult product of make-up artists for years!

100% of testers agreed that Garnier Micellar Cleansing Water removes face, lip and eye makeup perfectly*. Keeping skin clean doesn't need to be a chore – isn't it time you discovered the magic of micellar?





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START "I'm usually woken by my two darshunds, my "For "fast" "For "

a lot to catch up on, even on days off!"

or with spinach. On the weekend I like to indulge in a bit of bacon or sausage.'

"When I'm at home (so not living on room service!) I try to cook very clean meals - a piece of protein with salad or vegetables. I also have the luxury of eating all organic foods."

"I've just launched my Rosie for Autograph fragrance. When I first spoke to the perfumer, Ralph, I knew I wanted rose as the heart note. But it was more about the feeling I was trying to create. I wanted it to be emotive."

Rosie for Autograph Eau de Parfum. from £14

to read too - I've just

finished Lena Dunham's

book Not That Kind Of

Girl, which was a very

funny read."

"I feel unfinished without perfume. It helps to set the tone of where I'm going or who I want to be at that time. I like hearing, 'Oh, you smell amazing!' much more than, 'I love your shoes!''

Burt's Bees Tinted Lip Balm, £5.99

'George Northwood has been my London hairdresser since I was 16, when he was a junior and I was a broke model just starting out. He's the one boy friend that's stuck with me - he's seen them all come and go!"

"In LA I've been doing a highintensity, dance-based workout called Body by Simone. It's fun but not for the faint-hearted! I also love pilates - mixed with highcardio, it keeps me lean, taut and toned."

iS Clinical Active Serum £68

> Stila Convertible Color Dual Lip & Cheek Cream, £16

"My skin is very sensitive and it has taken me years to find the right products for it. One I use religiously is iS Clinical Active Serum.'

"On days off I use Laura Mercier Oil Free Tinted Moisturizer, Stila cream blushers for a dewy flush and Hourglass Arch Brow Sculpting Pencil - I'm very particular about my eyebrows. I'm not a big lipstick fan, but Burt's Bees does a nice tinted lip balm."

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It is often said that your health is mirrored in the appearance of your nails. *Perfectil® Plus Nails* is a specialist formula developed to provide all the benefits of Perfectil® Original, plus more. With over 25 micro-nutrients for all-round health, including naturally sourced Silica from Horsetail extract, MSM and Calcium. Plus Selenium to help maintain normal nails.

Perfectil® - because true radiance starts from within.











Original



Plus Skin



Max



Platinum











Two can play THAT GAME

Don't get left behind - join in the fun and games with Durex.co.uk's new discreet delivery service...

Play nice Naughty sex is always exciting, but one-on-one time together doesn't have to be wild every time - in fact, sometimes just getting some alone time is half the fun. And Durex PURF **BLISS Intimate Massager** promises the most intimate playtime, ever. With a specially designed shape for easy handling, three speeds and four pulse modes, you don't need kinky blindfolds and handcuffs to enjoy yourselves - with this, it's fun to play nice.

Candles? Towels?
Bubble bath? The new
EXTREME THRILL
Premium Rabbit makes
everything feel amazingly
smooth – even under
water – and your partner
won't be able to control
themselves after trying it
on you... just remember to
return the favour later!

9 Be vocal It's time to think back - when was the last time you got bossy? Thanks to the new REAL PLEASURE Multi-speed Vibrating Stimulator it just got easier than ever simply tell your partner what you want to have done to you, lie back and enjoy. Because the multi-speed stroker is made from body-safe materials and has a soft velvet touch surface for a sensually smooth sensation (plus powerful vibrations), you'll find yourself making it super-clear how much fun you're having...



Ready to join in?

What are you waiting for? Head over to one-stop-shop Durex.co.uk for more ideas on how to play (naughty or nice). And what's more, Durex now deliver the full range of new sex toys discreetly to your door... have you sent your partner the link yet?



L Go luxe

We might not all have time for couples' massages at a spa, but creating your own using the SENSUAL BLISS Intimate Massager is the next best thing. The curved velvet touch design provides powerful massage vibrations and with increasing speeds and different sensual patterns, each playtime is different from the last.

Try a quickie

Spontaneous no-effort sex? Yes please! You don't need a whole night in together to put a spring in your step (or your partner's). Grab him or her when they least expect it! The EXCITING **TOUCH Multi Functional** Stroker is designed with two speeds and three pulse modes - so your partner can use it on you, or you can tease him or her with the vibrations instead. Plus it's whisperquiet for the ultimate discretion - perfect for those opportune moments!

6 Go the distance

When was the last time you indulged in a little long-distance love? Even if you're not in a long distance relationship, a little textual tension before your big night in can work wonders. Start by telling your partner what you want to do – and exactly what you'd like him or her to do to you later – and wait for the fireworks to start!

places we're most likely to catch an STI - and some results may surprise you...

15%

of respondents caught an STI while having sex at a friend's house

13%

were on a uni campus

8%

were on a beach

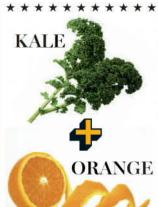
contracted an STI while at work

were getting jiggy at the cinema



SECONDS

... is the minimum time you need to hold a post-workout stretch to prevent sore muscles the next day. For flexibility, stay put for closer to a minute.







DETOX SMOOTHIE



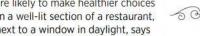
Scientists have found yoga can burn body fat, slash blood pressure and lower your heart-disease risk just as well as cardio workouts such as running or cycling. Downward dogs all round!



Nipping to the office kitchen for a cuppa can actually make you more productive at work, as experts found drinking tea boosts mood and enhances creativity. Get the kettle on!

Period pain Girls who started their period before the age of 10 or after turning 17 have a 16-27% higher risk of heart disease, stroke or other high-blood-pressure-related issues later in life, research found. But it's not all bad - a healthy diet and exercise can reduce any health risks, regardless of when your period arrived.

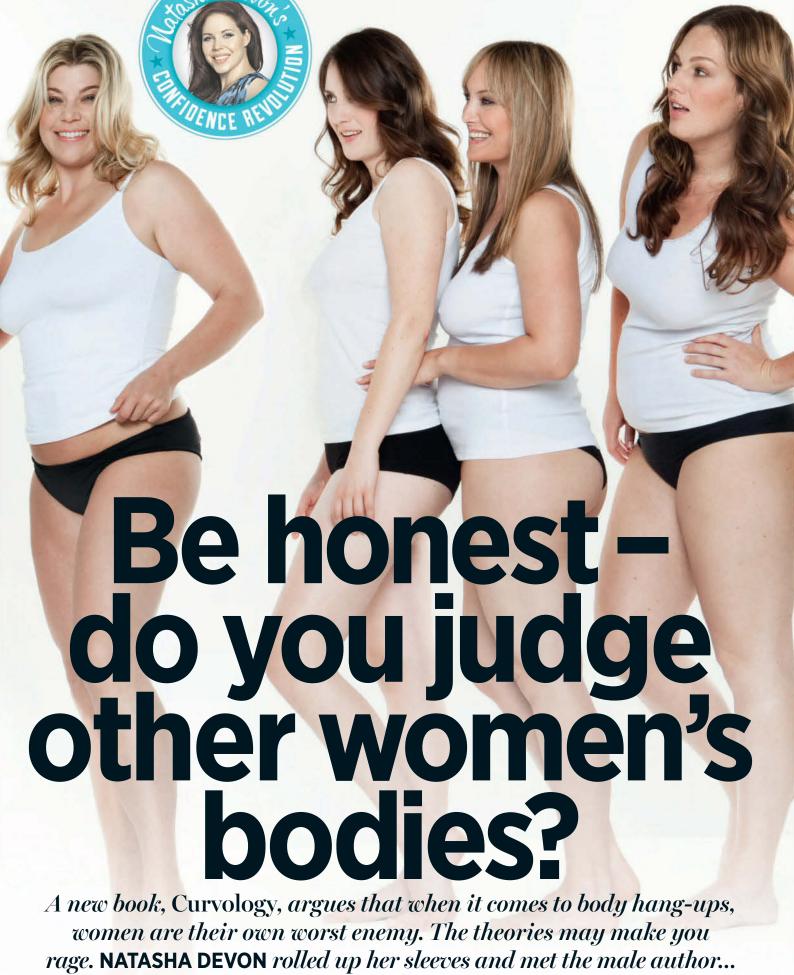
You're more likely to make healthier choices of you sit in a well-lit section of a restaurant, such as next to a window in daylight, says professor and food researcher Brian Wansink.



"I'VE NEVER **FELT A PUSH** TO BE STICK THIN. I WORK **OUT AND EAT** HEALTHILY, SO MOSTLY IT'S ABOUT **BEING IN** SHAPE AND **HAVING** ENERGY."







ext time you compile your fantasy dinner-party guest list, you might want to add David Bainbridge.
A cross between Professor Brian Cox

Professor Brian Cox and your favourite uncle, he's used his experience as a lecturer in reproductive biology at Cambridge University to write six books offering a peek into our brains. In them, he addresses mysteries such as why we feel the urge to have sex with different people at different times during our menstrual cycle, and why teenagers go through a phase where they hate the world and everyone in it. His latest work, *Curvology*, is dedicated to the female body – a topic that continues to be endlessly analysed.

"I decided to write the book for two reasons," David tells me. "Firstly, from a biological perspective, humans are the only species to have curvy females." The need for us to be intelligent in order to survive changed everything about how our bodies evolved, he says. Wide hips = wider birth canal = large-headed, intelligent babies with a greater chance of survival, hence research showing men are attracted to women with a low hip/ waist ratio. "I was fascinated by the sheer frequency with which women refer to their bodies," David adds. "They notice things men simply aren't attuned to."

So, what is his theory as to why, as women, we can become so looks-obsessed we might sacrifice our health in pursuit of an aesthetic ideal?

Our own worst enemy?

"It's women who place narrow beauty standards on themselves and on other women, and I think it's time we were honest about that," David says controversially. "Women need to ask themselves what *really* motivates them to make decisions about their appearance. I think you'll find most women [modify their looks] to impress other women."

David's book says this is because we're ultimately competing against each other for the attention of males to mate with – so we try to reach the top of the pecking order.

"I always find it helpful to ask: how many women have a male partner who actually *wants* her to have plastic surgery?" David says. "In the vast majority of cases, men would prefer their partner not to have it. We've evolved for a long time to pick up cues in a woman's appearance [that signal 'good' genes] and we can spot when aspects are artificial."

This triggers a bit of an internal dilemma for me. On the one hand, I hate it when people trot out the women-are-their-own-worst-enemy line. I've heard that lazy, generalising argument too many times, but when I ask myself whether I spend longer getting ready for a night with the girls or an evening with my boyfriend, I have to conclude he is... well, right. Can it be that my inner cavewoman is competing with my girlfriends?

Men are simple creatures...

We can complicate things. David believes that thinking more like a man about our bodies would make life a lot less stressful. "It's hard for women to appreciate how simplistically most men think about bodies – both their own and those of women," he explains. "Young men are more image-conscious than my generation, but even then the emotional parameters in which women think and talk about bodies is alien to most men."

The Much of emotional

parameters in which

women think and

talk about bodies is

completely alien

to most men'

Much of Curvology seems to be at odds with modern feminist thinking. Having met David and read three of his books, I know him to be a forwardthinking man who

believes in gender equality.
Yet, in the book he states that women are biologically less good at certain sports, which, frankly, made me bristle. "The actual words I used were men 'outperform' women in sports requiring speed or strength, which doesn't take into account any mental element," David explains. Meaning we're equally smart, just not as strong? "I didn't write the book to be feminist or anti-feminist, but unfortunately, evolution itself isn't particularly feminist."

Perhaps even more controversially, as men are simple creatures (David's words, not mine), their aesthetic preferences are, apparently, far more diverse than women give them credit for. So if our beauty standards aren't being enforced by men, they must be coming from other women.

Fighting biology

If we all acknowledge men are simple creatures and women are their own worst enemy, does that mean we can evolve past all this nonsense? Maybe not. "There's no evidence humans will ever stop valuing looks in a mate, or that we aren't wired to be nicer to beautiful people," David says, annoyingly. In the book, he describes an experiment in which college-application forms were left in telephone boxes. Those with photos of conventionally attractive people were more likely to be posted back to their owner. David and I agree it's a horrible experiment, and curse people for being so superficial. But ultimately there is no need for this competition.

"Research shows that people are attracted to 'averageness," David says. "Finding someone to bear your children is wired into us – even if you don't want kids, you still look for qualities that you'd want to pass down the generations. We want to create intelligent offspring because they have more chance of survival. Confidence is also

attractive, as it's a sign of social dominance. In the future, I

think we'll have a better understanding of what drives us, allowing us to make choices that will create a better society."

If David is right,

Curvology gives an

insight into how women

evolved to be, in some cases,
so self-destructive when it

comes to body image. As a woman's woman, it was, at times, uncomfortable reading. But identifying what motivates our more competitive behaviours will (hopefully) help us all forge better relationships with other women and our own bodies. And since both looks and intelligence are inherited, maybe we'll evolve to appreciate the one thing we *can* control: kindness.

• Curvology: The Origins And Power Of Female Body Shape by David Bainbridge (£14.99, Portobello) ◆

DO YOU AGREE WITH DAVID? TELL US AT COSMO.MAIL@HEARST.CO.UK



World's 1st SmartFoam pad Absorbs 10x its weight

Always Infinity isn't like any other pad. That's because it's the only pad made of SmartFoam, which moulds to your body and is so incredibly soft and thin, you barely feel it's there. Yet it still absorbs 10x its weight.

always



Healthete.

If you've faced death, looks don't matter'

Kelly Jackson, 26, loved life - but despite a horrific accident that destroyed her face, she learnt how to keep smiling...

efore the accident, I had everything going for me. I was 24 and about to start a new job as an account executive at a marketing agency. I had plenty of friends and loved big nights out, like the one we'd planned in May 2013 the one that changed my life.

I've always been keen to make the best of myself, so I'd slathered on the fake tan. threaded my eyebrows and had a manicure. I felt fantastic as a gang of us hit some bars in Birmingham, but I must have got a bit too drunk. Just before midnight, one of my friends called my ex, Will, and asked him to come and pick me up.

Dropping me off home, he told me to get a good night's sleep. "I'll see you in the morning," he promised. I fell asleep straight away. I don't remember much of what happened the following

morning, but just before 7am I woke up, and for some reason decided, still in my pyjamas, to go for a drive. To this day, I don't know what was going through my head I sleepwalked as a child, and it's crossed my mind that I might have been asleep.

I was only about half a mile from home in my Mini convertible when I clipped a tree – and what I do remember is screaming as the car flipped into the air, sending me tearing through the canvas top as it somersaulted on to the opposite side of the road. I was knocked unconscious - and had landed under the car with my legs pinned down. I later found out a woman who lived nearby had heard the crash. She ran out of her house, still in her nightie, and lay on the ground to comfort me until the ambulance arrived.

For the next two weeks I was in a coma in intensive care. When I woke up, I was told the car had severed my right leg above the knee. My neck, left ear, cheek and right breast had also been burnt it's thought by the heat from the car's exhaust.

Because my face was bandaged up, I couldn't see the damage, and the whole

situation just didn't feel real. My friends and family gave me strength as I gradually took in what had happened, and I came to terms with the loss of my limb. But when my bandages came off after four months in hospital, it was a big shock.

I couldn't control the left side of my face, and because of nerve damage I could hardly open my mouth I had to drink and eat through a straw.

Doctors gave me a hard, clear plastic mask, which I had to wear 23 hours a day to flatten the scar tissue. But I quickly made the decision to focus on the positives of what had happened. I'd been fairly into my looks before, but coming so close to death made me realise that appearances don't matter although admittedly the worst thing about my false leg is that I can't wear heels!

As I recovered, I dealt with my face by posting a smile a day on Instagram, using the hashtag #kellyssmile. I couldn't smile the same way anymore, but I still had plenty to be grateful for. I got such great feedback, I turned my idea into a blog. I posted a photo every day

on Instagram for '100 Happy Days; of something that cheered me up. I wanted to show people

the things that made me smile, and how much I had to be thankful for. I also hoped that if *I* could be positive – trapped in my mask, learning to live with losing my leg - others could too. Now, although I regret getting into my car that morning, I don't regret the changes it's made to my life. I no longer have to wear my mask, and I'm much less stressed than before. My smile looks very different now, but it's still there. And that's a lot to be thankful for.





Bye-bye body hang-ups

Dr Linda Papadopoulos unravels the causes of poor body image

THE DILEMMA

I regret having Botox



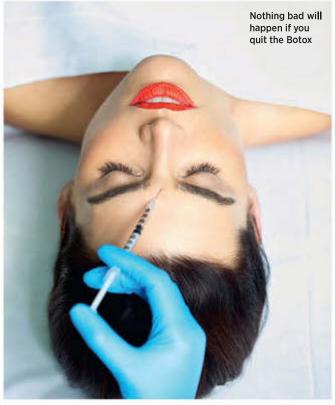
About four years ago, although only in my midtwenties, I started

having Botox injections in my face. A couple of my friends were doing it, and I just got sucked into the idea. But I'm starting to regret it. I think my face now looks weird, yet I'm also scared to stop having the injections as I'm paranoid it'll just collapse. Help!



It's amazing how the fear that exists in our society about ageing has

become so rife that even in our twenties we feel we need to start worrying about it. I see a lot of young women in my practice who feel if they can control how their body looks, they can somehow control what happens in their lives. When we obsess about a part of our body we don't like, we project all our anxieties on to it. So when something like Botox comes along to temporarily ease those worries, the danger is we become psychologically dependent on such procedures to deal with our anxieties. It's extremely unlikely you needed it to begin with; many doctors refuse to use it on people so young. The facts: if you stop using Botox, nothing bad will happen. Your face will return to its normal animation, and its



muscles will return to normal strength. Your skin won't suffer either. Yes, stopping a treatment you've been doing for a while is daunting. However, the sense of control you felt was nothing to do with the toxin you were injecting into your face, but the fact that you were doing something to address a bodyimage issue. So instead, do something that makes you feel good about your body. Look in the mirror and focus on what you like about yourself. There are so many ways to boost selfesteem - injecting toxin doesn't have to be one of them.

SELF-HELP CORNER

The poetry of Hollie McNish

RETWEET THIS WANT A POSITIVE, HAPPY THOUGHT TO SHARE ON TWITTER? DR LINDA'S INSPIRATIONAL WORDS WILL HELP...



Linda Papadopoulos @DrLinda_P Learn to argue fairly. The whole point of arguing is to get someone to see your point of view, not to 'win' the argument. #CosmosDrLinda

5 WAYS TO GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP



Set a regular bedtimeFollow the same routine to tell your body it's time to wind down.



Technology as part of your bedtime routine makes it harder to sleep.



Get your body readyRelax by having a warm bath, and never go to bed hungry *or* too full.



Get your room readyMake sure your room is
cool, dark, quiet and
well-ventilated.



Get your mind ready

Listen to relaxing music, and write a to-do list to prepare for the next day.

VICTORIA PETKOVIC-SHORT, 25, FROM GLOUCESTERSHIRE, WORKS IN PR

My bodys amazing because...

I used to have long, brown hair. In February 2011 I noticed a smooth patch on my scalp. I wasn't worried, but then I found a second patch – and a third. A dermatologist diagnosed alopecia, an autoimmune condition. No one knows what causes it, and there's no cure, but doctors said steroid injections might help, so I gave them a try. The pain was indescribable and my hair kept falling out. I stopped the injections, and by November all the hair on my body was gone.

It was such a shock, I cried my heart out. I was angry with my body for letting me down and with the doctors for having no cure. But I wasn't going to let this beat me or define me.

My first experiences of finding wigs and treatments were awful. One consultant sold me aloe vera juice for £30 that did nothing, and another sent me my custom-made wig four months late, in the wrong size. That's why I started working with wig-consultancy firm Aspire Hair last year. It's fantastic – nobody should have to suffer the hassles that I did. I've also organised and starred in a nude calendar for Alopecia UK with 11 other ladies! The charity has done so much for me, it's great to be able to do something to help.

I draw my eyebrows on and wear false lashes. On bad days when my hair was falling out, I'd make myself think of positives. Now, the list is quite long – I never did much with my hair, but I love that I can have a style for every mood! I'm stronger for being bald. It's taken time to get to this point, but I can't change it, so I might as well make the best

might as well make the best of it. I'm more confident now than I've ever been.

 Get Alopecia UK's 2015 calendar at Prettybald.co.uk



Ready for a new smile?

For more opportunities to get pregnant naturally try Clearblue Digital Ovulation Test with Dual Hormone Indicator. It's **the only test** that tracks 2 key fertility hormones to typically identify **4 or more fertile days**¹.



www.clearblue.com

Clearblue Digital Ovulation Test with Dual Hormone Indicator identifies more opportunities than other ovulation tests. In a study of 87 women, 4 or more fertile days were identified in 80% of cycles using actual cycle length. Read instructions before use. ©2014 SPD Swiss Precision Diagnostics GmbH. All rights reserved.



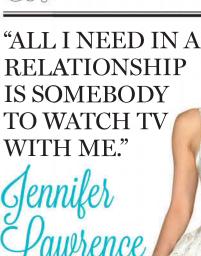


When picking a first-date restaurant...

... men are more romantic – 36% of them choose a venue based on its romance factor, compared to just 24% of women. We're more likely to pick somewhere with good reviews - ever practical.

95% OF PEOPLE DRIFT OFF INTO A SEXUAL FANTASY AT LEAST ONCE A

Well, you've got to pass the time somehow...



keeps it simple



Sex or a good night's sleep? 68% of us would take the extra shut-eye, thanks.



of Brits date multiple people at once - three's the average, apparently.



ASKED HOW MANY TIMES THEY KISS THEIR PARTNER EACH DAY, MEN THINK IT'S 10 BUT WOMEN REMEMBER FIVE. SCIENTISTS THINK THE MEN ARE EXAGGERATING.



The height of a woman's shoe heel affects how helpful men are towards her - the higher it is, the more attentive they'll be. Good to know.



PERFECT

46% of us say we're having the best sex of our lives right now. Long may it continue!

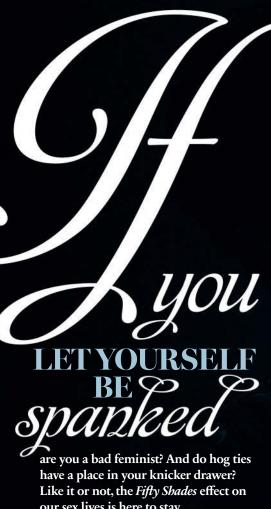
Men with ages ending in a 9 are more likely to sign up to affair websites than those of any other age.







It's the book that took bondage and domination into the mainstream – and now the film promises to set our bedrooms alight all over again. But has it changed your sex life?



our sex lives is here to stay.

'Sticks and stones may break my bones, but whips and chains excite me', sings Rihanna in S&M, a love song about extreme sex. And it seems she's not alone. Just a few years ago, Charlotte talking about her Rabbit addiction in Sex And The City was seen as shockingly (and, for women, refreshingly) open. But these days, RiRi raps about sadomasochism, while over at Tesco women happily snap up a range of Fifty Shades-inspired 'Hard Limits' knickers. Take a trip to Ann Summers and you'll find equipment such as spreader bars, 'jiggle balls' and hog ties on sale next to the willy straws and flavoured lube which, until recently, seemed to make up the majority of products on offer.

In just a few years, we've gone from hen-night naughtiness to no-holdsbarred bondage - and it's all thanks to Fifty Shades Of Grey, the best-selling erotic novel by EL James, which, in case you've been living in the Big Brother house for the past three years deprived of any outside communication, charts the relationship between the wideeyed, lip-biting virgin Anastasia Steele and multimillionaire Christian Grey,



with his private jet and 'red room of pain'. But has the UK always been fond of a bit of bondage – a nation of Christians and Anastasias writhing in pleasurable pain? Or has the rise of 'filth-fic' like Fifty Shades (borrowing of erotic fiction in Britain's libraries rose by 500% in its wake) encouraged us to try something new?

FLIGHT OF FANTASY

"Fifty Shades opened a whole new world to me - I'd always had fantasies about being spanked, but never felt I could say anything to my partner," admits Mia*, 31, from Cardiff. "We had a good time in bed, but it was pretty standard stuff. I never had the kind of orgasms I have now, and I can go into a sex shop and buy whatever I want without embarrassment. A lot of people have started to experience things they never imagined – and if it's thanks to the books, so be it."

According to a Europe-wide survey on bondage by Lovehoney, 60% of British couples have tried it - compared with just a third of couples in Germany, France and Spain - and 65% of Brits have had sex blindfolded. "Fifty Shades has enabled couples to explore fantasies that might previously have been considered too risqué," says Annabelle Knight, relationship expert at Lovehoney. "It's helped bondage go

mainstream, giving women 'permission' to become more sexually assertive. Now, putting a blindfold on your partner or tying them up just seems like the harmless fun it really is, rather than the sort of thing that only happens in dungeons or at swingers' parties."

But is all this whipping, spanking and bondage-based merriment just another way of catering to men's fantasies? "Fifty Shades is clearly about sexuality that's aimed at women," says orgasm coach Dr Lisa Turner. "So much erotica and porn is directed at men, but these books take a big step towards recognising that many women enjoy it too."

At Ann Summers, within an hour of the release of the new film's trailer, sales of restraints tripled and sales of floggers and paddles for spanking doubled - and experts say it's women driving the trend. "Sex with a sadomasochistic edge is becoming more approachable," says Ann

Summers' Krysty Hazell-Page. "What's great is that it encourages women to explore the idea and be more vocal when it comes to their sexual wants and needs."

And men, it seems, are only too happy to enjoy the result of this new wave of confidence. "I read Fifty Shades and didn't think much of it as literature," says Charles, 32, from Keele. "But it prompted a discussion with my girlfriend that led us to introduce more kink into our sex life. I was intrigued by the BDSM [bondage, discipline, sadism and masochism] contract Christian gets Anastasia to sign. When my girlfriend and I chatted about it, she confessed to having a fantasy about being tied down and 'examined' in a laboratory. We acted it out, and it was explosive - for both of us."

Dr Turner says that sexperimentation can be hugely beneficial, emotionally and psychologically, for men and women. "Just like at the gym, where it's good to increase the repertoire of what your body can do, experimenting sexually is

part of stretching your body's emotional and sexual muscles," she says. "Going to the gym isn't always easy but it challenges us - and when

I gave him the we step out of our sexual comfort zone safely, and talk about what did and didn't work, that's good for us too."

A GREY AREA

'He might

be in charge

in bed, but

only because

power'

The downside to this sexplosion (sorry: there's always a downside) is that feminists, both male and female, have found it difficult to square our new interest in kink with their strongly held principles. After all, we've fought tooth and nail for equality, only to lie back and allow ourselves to be tied up. Isn't that the opposite of what we should be doing?

"I struggled with submission for a long time - how could I be a feminist if I got so much pleasure from being told what to do?" says Cate, 28, from Wolverhampton. "But now I feel it takes a strong person to freely give their power to

someone else. My partner might be in charge in bed, but only because I say so, and my desires are met by handing my power to him. If I'm in cuffs, over his knee being spanked, or even on all fours acting as a footstool, it's because I want it to happen. It's liberating to submit."

Dr Turner argues that asking for what you want in bed, even if that's to be dominated, can be an act of feminism. "Just a few decades ago, women's sexual needs were barely considered," she says. "Simply asking for foreplay or oral sex was seen as expecting too much - if we expressed our desires, we were deemed slutty. There needs to be communication and emotional sensitivity in any relationship. Experimenting together is part of the process."

Mia agrees: "I felt relieved reading the books – they uncovered things I'd hidden deep inside. I thought it wasn't right to be tied up, even though I loved it. It's sad that people moan about Fifty Shades – it's

opened the eyes of millions of women and made them realise there's more out there than vanilla sex."



Fifty Shades

NOT EVERYONE IN THE BDSM COMMUNITY IS HAPPY ABOUT HOW THEIR WORLD HAS BEEN PORTRAYED...

Fifty Shades may paint a compelling image of kinky sex, but is it accurate? James, 35, from Brighton, is a member of Fetlife.com, a kink-positive socialnetworking site. He argues that the subtleties of the scene are missing from the books.

"Ana and Christian's relationship is a total mismatch," he says. "In true BDSM play there's a synergy: submissives adore the painful attentions of their dominants, who feed off the enjoyment their submissives express."

Then there's the issue of the book's hero, who may be a helicopterowning millionaire, but is also a damaged victim of abuse. "Fifty Shades is, in so many ways, a bad book, but it has opened a space in popular culture where we can discuss our desires in earnest," says professional dominatrix Margaret Corvid. "But it's also dangerous, because it portrays the controlling and abusive Christian Grey as attractive. In the kink community, we play with pain, power and control, but our ethos is that we do so only with the most stringent and informed consent."

The key thing is that Fifty Shades is fiction, not fact. "People often forget it's intended to shock,' says Dr Turner. "It's not a 'how-to' manual."



'I love having sex with my favourite person – me'



Masturbation is something most women find hard to

talk about. Jenny Paul isn't one of those...

y typical workday morning goes a bit like this: I'll spend a while writing emails in my capacity as a website manager, keeping a firm eye on the clock. As 11am looms and my colleagues nip off for a coffee, I head to the ladies' for my regular masturbation break. It's a treat I enjoy up to five times a day – and have done since I fell in love

with my vagina in my early teens. Armed with a lipstick-sized bullet that lives in my handbag, I can get myself off in 60 seconds flat in a toilet cubicle in my office building – and I don't mind who knows it. Luckily I work with some hilarious and frank women, and amazingly open guys, so masturbation isn't a topic off the table for discussion.

And we're not alone – the UK sex-toy business is now worth over £250million a year, and plenty of celebs have confessed they enjoy flying solo. Eva Longoria gives out vibrators to her pals as presents, declaring, "It's the best gift to give – an orgasm." And if indulging in a onesome has Hollywood's seal of approval, then who am I to argue?

I talk quite candidly about my extensive vibrator collection if it comes up in conversation. But far too many people are obsessed with projecting an idealised image of themselves, rather than being open and honest (in fact, the quickest way to pleasure).

It was one of my first boyfriends who taught me how to ring my own bells. Sean* worked away from home a lot and liked regular phone sex. He gave me detailed instructions on what to do to myself, and I learnt how to have one of those

eye-rolling, body-shaking orgasms where I'd almost forget my own name. After doing it in unison over the phone for so long, when we *did* meet up, the sex was much better. It taught me that masturbation is brilliant, whether you're in or out of a relationship.

I can masturbate pretty much anywhere, although I can do without it too. It's a hobby, not an addiction; if I had to give it up tomorrow I'd shrug (albeit sadly) and get on with my life. The only downside is that I've got so good at it, getting frisky with a new man can pale in comparison. In those first few weeks when we're still learning each other's preferences, it sometimes feels like a lot less effort to indulge in a spot of orgasm-guaranteed DIY.

Plus, when you're as enthusiastic as I am, there's always the risk of being caught. One time I was noisily trying out a new vibrator when I heard a sound in my hallway. I peeked out of the bedroom door and was horrified to see the cleaner standing there, looking faintly terrified. It's one thing enjoying your own body, but quite another for strangers to hear you having multiple orgasms...

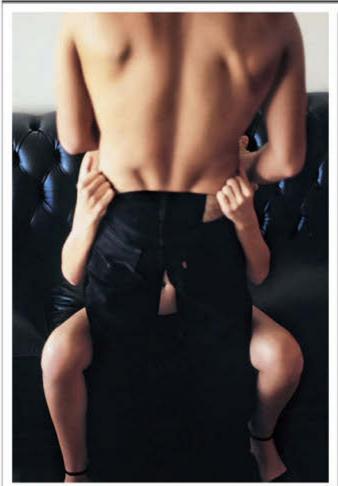
But the odd hiccup hasn't deterred me. Masturbation is calorie-free, eases stress and anxiety, costs nothing and is absolutely harmless – what's not to love? If we all masturbated more often, I strongly believe there'd be fewer arguments and wars, and certainly a lot more smiley faces on the train journey home every day. And if the idea of cracking one off at work is making you uptight? Well, I've got a suggestion that might release some of that tension...

HOW OFTEN IS YOUR 'NORMAL'? TELL US AT COSMO.MAIL @HEARST.CO.UK



Sex therapy

For change-your-life sex advice, ask Cosmo's sex psychotherapist, Pachel Morris



His oral request is a turn-off

Why does my boyfriend want me to make eye contact during oral? I find it awkward and uncomfortable: my head's at the wrong angle and having my mouth full of him isn't a flattering expression! I also feel subservient, which I hate. Is it a power trip for him?

He's either objectifying you as a 'slave' in his 'master' fantasy OR simply trying to connect with you for a more intimate experience. Neither of which has anything to do with your feeling of subservience. When you do something you don't want to do (because he asked you to), you make a servant of yourself. Take control; find out why he likes it. If it's intimacy he's after, you can either work on finding a better position for your neck or tell him you feel too self-conscious. If it's power play, explain that you don't enjoy this type of fantasy and in future you'll be closing your eyes – or your mouth (his choice).

Has baby crushed his libido?

Since having a baby eight months ago, my partner and I have only had sex twice. He makes excuses about tiredness and stress but I know he secretly masturbates. Why is he lying?

Sex is about connection, which requires focus and energy, whereas masturbation is an effortless distraction; it's not about desire and doesn't mean he's lying. Mothers are expected to lose their libido in the early days of parenthood, but it happens to dads too. A new baby is like a grenade exploding in your relationship; it takes time for the dust to settle. Talk, listen and focus on non-sexual touching to restore intimacy without the pressure.

He's a flop

My boyfriend is so still in bed. He says he likes sex but he doesn't show it. He's quite shy and insecure so I try to be patient. His confidence will improve, won't it? Not if you keep treating him like a baby bird that can't fend for itself. Confidence is the reward we get from taking risks and surviving them. Shyness and insecurity are uncomfortable emotional states, not reasons for going AWOL in the bedroom. You're each equally responsible for making sex work. Allowing him to stick his head in the sand isn't doing you or him any favours so tell him the sex isn't good enough, and that whether he flies or flops, you need him to try.



Betrayal kills my

My girlfriend dumped me for another bloke, which left me in a mess. I begged her to come back and she did, but now every time I try to have sex with her I think about him and lose my erection. I've forgiven her - why can't my penis? You may have consciously forgiven her but your unconscious isn't going to let you forget the crushing agony of her betrayal. Our unconscious often works in mysterious ways, sending us messages we don't want in the form of something physical we can't control, eg, sexual dysfunction. I've learnt that if we listen to our inner voice and act on it, these symptoms go away - you need to accept that you can't just go back to where you were before. Couple counselling may help: see Relate.org.uk.



CONTACT RACHEL

Write to: RACHEL MORRIS, Cosmopolitan, 72 Broadwick Street, London W1F 9EP ar email rachel@cosmopolitan.co.uk



Ask Irma

She's the world's best agony aunt and is here for you when your friends can't be



I can't stop spending!

I'm 26 and ever since I started earning at 16, I haven't been able to stop spending. I buy and buy until I have hardly any money left. And now it's causing problems in my relationship as my boyfriend wants us to save for the future. How can I stop? Drugs all have one thing in common: eventually they themselves become the pain or the problem you started taking them to escape. The addict needs a fix to avoid the agony of withdrawal. For shopaholics, whose addiction is not physical, cold turkey won't be enough. Even if you cancel your credit cards, the burning desire to buy will go on until you discover what it is you're really shopping for. Self esteem? Sexual satisfaction? Whatever it is, it's not available in the shops. Face the real thing that you lack, find help if you need it and then go for it, girl!

When vou see a doctor back pain, cause to eliminate it.

With emotional pain, pointing the finger at who or what is responsible doesn't help. Blame wastes time and energy better spent on a) sorting the issue with those involved or b) cutting the trouble out of your life and walking away.

I'm not, sure he's Mr Right

I've been dating a guy for the past two years. We can only see each other a few times a year. I am 20; he's 23. When we're together I know he is the man of my dreams. When we're apart we text, Skype and talk on the phone all the time, but the relationship feels more in my head than in my heart. He's sure about being with me, but I'm not. I tell myself I love him, so why do I want to start dating other men? Emails, texting and phone calls are great methods of keeping in touch, but not so great for staying in love. Electronic connections move a relationship away from the heart and into the head where imagination lives. And that's dangerous, because we see, hear and say what we imagine should be true. Before you date other men, give yourself a chance to see who this guy is. Spend a chunk of time together, eye to eye, so you can talk and share. Then you'll know how you feel.

I can't move on!

I was with this man for three years, but there was no spark, so I ended things. Now every time I start seeing someone I find myself remembering him. It's a vear since we split; since then I've had four different partners, but nothing serious. How do I fall out of love? I'm stuck.

The spark that ignites love between partners can grow into a warm hearth that shelters them and keeps them together, sometimes for life. But that achievement requires fuelling from both partners, otherwise the spark sputters out, leaving ashes. Because you felt no spark remained, you walked out. So it's not love you need to fall out of, it's regret. Face the reasons for your relationship going cold; only then will you put that unhappy ending behind you and free yourself for a new beginning. Maybe - but it's a very long shot - with him again, if he's willing.

Write ta: ASK IRMA, Cosmopolitan, 72 **Broadwick Street,** London W1F 9EP ar email Irma@ cosmopolitan.co.uk*

CONTACT IRMA

PHOTOGRAPH CAMERA PRESS/FIGAROPHOTO. ILLUSTRATION KATY WAKEFIELD. IRMA REGRETS SHE CANNOT ANSWER YOUR LETTERS PERSONALLY. *PLEASE NOTE: THIS EMAIL ADDRESS IS FOR AGONY PROBLEMS ONLY

Dimp your parcaked. Make Sunday morning healthier and happier with these wholegrain beauties

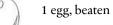


BY TAYLOR ANDERSON. PHOTOGRAPHS JAMES BAIGRIE, GETTY, ISTOCKPHOTO.COM, SHUTTERSTOCK

Ingredienta

125g wholemeal flour (use buckwheat if you're coeliac - it's gluten-free)

2tsp baking powder



1 small banana, well mashed

300ml skimmed milk



Combine the pancake ingredients in a bowl to make the batter.



Heat a non-stick frying pan, griddle or baking stone to a medium temperature.

> To make each pancake, pour in 1tbsp of the mixture and cook until you see bubbles rising and the top begins to dry.

Then flip over and cook the other side for a further minute. Cook 3 or 4 at a time depending on the size of the pan.

STAY FULL FOR LONGER

A handful of chopped nuts, such as walnuts or almond shavings, will ramp up the protein content so you feel full until lunchtime.



BOOST YOUR SKIN

Packed with healthy fats, fibre, potassium and skin-loving B and E vitamins, avocado is amazing for your complexion.

TREAT YOURSELF

For a lush dessert, swap syrup for a dollop of ice cream and a cheeky drizzle of Baileys on top of a warm stack.







COSTOS OF TOLOGY With Cosmo's psychic astrologer Jessica Adams With Cosmo's psychic astrologer Jessica Adams

PISCES 19 FEB-19 MAR

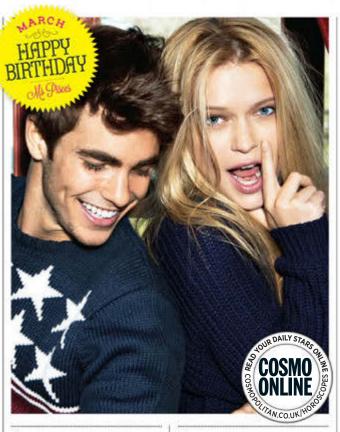
The spotlight shines on you temporarily, then moves on to someone else. A serious, practical male will do a hands-on job for you. Money is affecting a friend's love-life decisions, so say your piece. A project that can be anything you want it to be demands a commitment.

Artes 20 MAR-19 APR

Fabulous improvements to your workplace could lead to more if you show gratitude. A dazed and confused soul does not need your rescue operation, so walk away. Why not claim a project as your own? It started out as yours. And find out what that prim female is covering up.

Tourus 20 APR-20 MAY
Wonderful weekends await
if you can just clear your
diary backlog. A man who
lies about his talents fakes
other things too, so be
careful. No idea why a
friend has gone off the
radar? It's her family. Pursue
rare and exotic food – you'll
be so pleased you did. And
confirm a September event.

People are passing the buck and nothing is being done, so you must intervene. Fantastic praise and rewards for a job well done should be gratefully received. Something (or someone) you were addicted to no longer appeals to you. And an exhibitionist female is troubled, so reach out.



Cancer 21 JUN-22 JUL

An antique or vintage collectable leads you to a very special person now. Find out why a project or object has been rejected by at least two people and walk away. News involving a low-key man in your life makes you happy. And why not fix a cash situation with one small remedy?

Amazing offers and opportunities come your way when you put prejudice aside. Coax someone into giving you more on a deal that's already generous. A person who is all mouth and no trousers is wasting your energy. Beginners' lessons in a brand-new field help you make progress.

Vugo 23 AUG-22 SEP

Nobody knows what you have been doing or achieving without any recognition, but you won't reveal anything until September. You'll change your friendhsip style and attract totally different people. Don't brush off kind words from a woman. She speaks the truth.

Libra 23 SEP-22 OCT

Mass movements or large group efforts change your destiny. An introduction to a suitable new date or work contact leaves you cold. Find out what superb holiday options there are in May. Trust a person who has qualifications to advise you, as he also learnt in the school of life.

You will be invited into someone's beautiful home and perhaps their life. Arguments will be solved with a sense of humour. A European female needs to simplify her life and you can help. Why not try the game that a flirtatious male recommends? It's part of your life CV.

Tremendous effort that goes into an imperfect outcome has not been wasted as you learnt so much. Fantastic female friends help you find the best bargains. You'll be amazed at how big a new project actually is. Take it in turns to handle this, though, as credit will need to be shared around.

Capricorn 22 DEC-19 JAN

A sneaky work or money contact should be handled with care. Closeness with those who believe in your goals turns your year around. You will be fishing for your perfect outcome, but don't take too long as you could lose your catch. A single female relative has some clever advice for you.

Aquatus 20 JAN-18 FEB
Nobody realises what you
went through last year and
now is the time to share.
A strong female is worth
following. Ask yourself why
you lost out on a position
or project and nail the issue
as it will return – and you
can succeed. A fitness or
food option you're chasing
needs a serious review.





Paris

Thought the city of light and romance was out of your league budget-wise? Well, Generator (Generatorhostels.com) opens a haute hostel this month, with beds from £19 in a shared room to £38 for a private room. Based in the cool 10th arrondissement by Canal Saint-Martin, this is no dingy backpacker joint – we're talking roof terrace with sunset views of the Sacré-Coeur, en suites, and a buzzy bar and restaurant. With Eurostar return tickets from £69 (Eurostar. com), Paris is now totally affordable.



Porto

Portugal's second-largest city has been under the radar for years, but thanks to a rash of new galleries, restaurants, boutiques and hotels, it's started to get seriously noticed. Take advantage of EasyJet's flights from Manchester, Bristol and Luton from April 2015 (Easyjet.com) and book the chic yet cheap Rosa Et Al Townhouse, from £77 per night (I-escape.com).



Seville

Game Of Thrones fan? HBO has confirmed part of series five is being filmed around Andalucia's Seville, thanks to the area's Moorish fortresses and lush gardens. Our tip is Casa de Carmona, a Renaissance palace just outside the city where you can wallow in GOT-style opulence, but easily take day trips to the city centre. Rooms from £53 per night (Casadecarmona.com); EasyJet flights from £62 return.



Europe's 5 chicest bargain breaks

See the sights and still have enough money to treat yourself in the shops





Motto of original Cosmo girl Helen Gurley Brown

Pisa

A recent survey by Hotels.com reveals this Italian city has the most five-star hotels under £100 per night in Europe. Not sure about you, but a three-star will do us just fine - particularly when they're featured from just £30 per night on the Hotels.com site! There's plenty to do in this pretty city on a long weekend (aside from taking comedy pictures of you propping up the leaning tower): head to Il Campano for great Tuscan food and Leningrad Café for late-night drinks, cabaret and music. Ryanair flights from £45 return (Ryanair.com).

AMANDA STATHAM. PHOTOGRAPHS 4CORNERS IMAGES, GETTY IMAGES



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Our picks for March



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'Look! I bought the same necklace as you! Now we're NECKLACE TWINS!'

Your bezzie is totally worth the embarrassment of matching accessories.

YOU'RE OUT OF SEMI-SKIMMED? AND HOW OLD IS THIS CHEESE, EXACTLY?'

She's allowed to criticise the contents of your fridge because what's yours is hers. Plus you regularly get her to pick up your shopping, so what's yours really is hers.

'I had leftover takeaway curry for breakfast with some old lasagne on the side.'

It's all about not judging

- and maybe even a side
order of envy if you guys
are really tight.

'You don't mind chipping in for your bridesmaid's dress, do you? You can wear it afterwards...'

You both know pink satin is no one's go-to party look. But you suck it up.



THINGS

IT'S ONLY OK FOR YOUR BEST FRIEND TO SAY

'Any chance we can reschedule? Hangover. From. HELL.'

No one else is allowed to cancel an hour before Friday-night drinks. But you understand because you've been there too. 'CAN YOU COME WITH ME TO THE LOO...?'

Wrestling your friend out of her jumpsuit – or even worse, actually pulling her knickers down on her wedding day – comes with the job. 'Why isn't he
into you?
Because you're
still in love with
your ex and are
a bit of a clingy
mess right now.'

She's the one who's going to help you get back on your feet, so this one's acceptable. Just.

'CN U com nd pik me up? PUB drnk. Luvluv. Xoxox'

You'd tell anyone else to get a cab and hope for the best. But you'll go the extra mile for your BFF.

'Do you think he fancies me? Look through his texts and give me your honest opinion? You don't have to be up early tomorrow, right?'

Grab a bottle of wine and some Doritos and go with it.

'Seriously.
Dude. This
whole look
you're going
for isn't
working.'

Sometimes the harsh, brutal words of truth need to be spoken.

BY ROSIE MULLENDER. PHOTOGRAPH ANAIS & DAX/AUGUST



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